

How to Get the Most Out of CompuServe



by Charles Bowen and David Peyton

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF COMPUERVE

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**Charles Bowen
and David Peyton**



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To our wives, Pamela and Susie,
who kept the home fires burning
for these electronic travelers.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF COMPUVERSE
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Preface

It began over coffee at a restaurant in Huntington, West Virginia, where we live.

By that time, both of us considered ourselves veterans of the CompuServe Information Service, since we'd each operated on-line discussion forums on this national computer network. But prior to our signing on as independent contractors with CompuServe to manage sections of the growing service, we had "paid our dues," in more ways than one.

We had spent untold dollars learning how the system operates. We had spent hundreds of hours winding our way through the menu mazes as we explored every section of the system. We made lots of mistakes. We felt at various times embarrassed, threatened, and overwhelmed. Mostly, however, we were impressed and excited that so much information and so much power to communicate were available through our home computers. We saw the future and it seemed to work quite well.

Since both of us are journalists, we spotted a major problem right away. This huge and expanding service had no detailed, readily available "road map." The documentation provided by CompuServe is less than spectacular. And what there was of it was scattered among a dozen or more books and manuals.

Maybe, we thought, new users were supposed to flounder around in the memory of the CompuServe computers as a kind of test. Perhaps that was part of the adventure of this new age.

But while we toughed it out and found the "treasures" in this new-style adventure game, we kept meeting CompuServe users who simply gave up. We met people who said they found one or two

features that interested them, figured out how to use them, and gave up learning any more about what CompuServe has to offer.

Some people quit entirely. They put their passwords away and never used them again after having a bad experience or two on a system that seemed to them to be more a maze than anything else.

After several cups of coffee that fateful evening, we both had the same thought at about the same time: Somebody ought to write a book about how to use CompuServe.

Coming up with the idea was the easy part. It always is. And writing the rough manuscript wasn't all that difficult. In fact, it was a labor of love. Bringing this book to the birthing stage, however, was more complicated, a stage that ultimately involved more people than just the writers.

We were fortunate in having the book read by the two best editors in the world. They are our wives—Pamela Bowen and Susan Peyton. Not only did they edit our work, they forgave us when we spent silent hours huddled over our keyboards recording our explorations in this exciting new computer world.

Thanks, too, to Stewart Schneider who let us use his office, his microcomputers, his printer and copier to print the manuscript from computer disks and make manuscript copies. And for advice and encouragement when the going got rough.

And special thanks to Rich Baker and Doug Branstetter of CompuServe who read the manuscript for accuracy. We know their help will mean as much to the readers as it has to us.

CompuServe has become a big part of our lives now, and we're not alone. Some 100,000 people across the country have already "plugged in" to the CompuServe community. We hope our book will not only show you the highways and short cuts around CompuServe, but will help you become a good citizen of this electronic community as well.

And if you enjoy reading the book half as much as we enjoyed writing it, you're in for the time of your life!

Charles Bowen
Dave Peyton

CHAPTER 1

Welcome to Micropolis!

Being a pioneer can be expensive.

Still, several years ago when we heard about the CompuServe Information Service, we couldn't resist the chance to explore it. The idea of thousands of microcomputer owners across the country using their machines to talk to each other every night was downright fascinating.

If you own a personal computer, you've probably heard of CompuServe, the fastest-growing "information utility" in the country. But what people are saying about it probably sounds like the promises of a barker at some space-age sideshow. For instance, they'll tell you that, through CompuServe, you can:

—Write and post letters electronically and make them available to recipients across a continent in a matter of minutes.

—"Chat" with friends coast to coast by just typing messages on the screen and waiting for replies.

—Do last-minute Christmas shopping without leaving your living room by ordering gifts from computerized stores.

—Join nationwide electronic clubs devoted to anything from gardening and games to specific computer equipment.

Well, at the risk of sounding like electronic evangelists, all that's true. In fact, that's just a fraction of what some 100,000 computer owners around the nation do through CompuServe every night.

When we made our first stumbling steps into this electronic world, we were skeptics—leaden-eyed journalists, not easily wowed. We expected this "network nation" to prove an interesting diversion

at best. At worst, so much hype, not exactly an unknown additive in the microcomputer industry.

Some time later, we emerged from our first trek into this brave new world enthusiastic. And hooked. Both of us had daily habits.

We also were considerably poorer. As we said, this exploration business is not for fixed incomes.

You hold before you the testimonials of two gentlemen who spent hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars prowling the back roads of CompuServe, looking for the "good stuff."

We found it. And along the way, we discovered better roads. Being stubborn sorts, our lessons usually came the hard way. No scouts worth their bunions are going to trust the first promising shortcut to come along.

What we think we've come up with is a good, reliable way to learn about CompuServe, a plan to tour the most territory at the minimum expense, and, in the end, to teach you enough about how this remarkable system works to allow you to carry on alone.

Our method is a little unusual, as tutorial books go. Instead of simply lecturing you, we want you to accompany us on some "on-line tours" of CompuServe. Together, we'll look at the major features of the system and how to make them do their stuff. With this book beside your computer as you log on to CompuServe, we'll walk you through some areas of the system that took us months to find on our own. We'll show you parts of CompuServe that even some longtime subscribers have been intimidated by (for no good reason).

In the end, we expect you to be comfortable enough with CompuServe to be able to customize the system for your own needs. You'll be able to use all kinds of time-saving (i.e., money-saving) options. More importantly, you'll be able to go directly to the features you want.

Now, a word to you folks who have been hunkering down in the back of the hall: This guide is *not* just for people who have never seen CompuServe before. In fact, we hope that some of you who come along on this expedition have tried CompuServe on your own, even if you got tangled in the undergrowth.

And, on the other end of the spectrum, if you don't have a computer yet, but are curious about CompuServe, we have room for you, too. All along the tours of the system, we will be showing you what's taking place on the screen. Of course, the material will be more meaningful if you have access to a computer, but if that's not to be, you'll still not be left out.

CompuServe is an enormous service. It can be frustrating and just plain boring if you have no idea where you're going. But we've got some road maps that should help. Also, in the back of this book is

a section we call "The On-line Survival Kit," which summarizes some of the most important features and commands in CompuServe.

In the rest of this chapter, we'd like to give you a little history of CompuServe and where it is today. And we'd like to wrap up with a few words of encouragement for you new guys.

BUT FIRST ...

We have to make certain assumptions in this book and we might as well get them out of the way early.

We must assume that you know a few things about your microcomputer. You won't need to program anywhere in this book, but we do have to assume that you can load a program and run it. At last count, there were about a hundred different kinds of microcomputers logging in to CompuServe, and we just can't deal with specifics on individual computers.

We also have to assume that you have a modem and that your computer is capable of communicating. You'd be amazed at how many people think they can talk to CompuServe by setting a telephone next to their computer. If you're one of those people—we mean no offense—please check with your computer store and make sure you have all the necessary equipment to go "on-line."

We assume you have some kind of communications program, also called a *terminal program*, a *terminal emulator*, *comm pack*, or whatever the jargon is in your community. CompuServe sells its own fine communications program called Vidtex (referred to as the "CompuServe executive program"). This program is available with some CompuServe start-up kits and is an excellent first terminal program for exploring CompuServe.

We also assume that you plan to communicate with CompuServe at 300 baud and that your terminal program already is set to CompuServe's configuration—even parity, seven-bit words, one stop bit. If you're not sure how your program is configured, don't panic. Just check the On-line Survival Kit in the back of the book for a discussion of modem settings. The kit also tells you how to locate 1200-baud lines to CompuServe, if you need them.

Some of the most frequent questions we hear about CompuServe really deal with software, rather than the system itself. For example, many new users wonder if they can get printouts of what they see on the screen. Others wonder if they can write letters off-line and then connect to CompuServe and deliver them. The answer to both questions is yes—if you have the right software. When you're shopping for

your communications program look for "smart-terminal" software, such as CompuServe's own Vidtex program. Tell your computer-store representative how you want to use CompuServe, and get his or her advice.

There are hundreds of different computers on the market and many, many communications programs available for each. Since all of us are using different computers, different modems, and different software, obviously we won't be able to have much discussion here about problems you might have with any of those components. We can only cop out by referring you to your owners' manuals and your service representatives.

What we can talk about is the common ground among all of us—CompuServe, which will treat us all the same, no matter what machines we're using.

With that out of the way, let's plunge in.

WHAT IS A COMPUERVE?

CompuServe began in 1969 in Columbus, Ohio, when a small insurance holding company toyed with the idea of using computers to help manage its business. Not too sure of what computers could do, the company hired some experts to do a business study and determine what it would cost to set up a data-processing operation.

The report, prepared by a twenty-five-year-old engineering graduate, showed the data-processing subsidiary would lose money the first year.

"Do it," said the insurance company's president. The engineer, Jeffrey M. Wilkins, convinced some of his associates to join him in building this fledgling "computer" company. They opened the operation by leasing time on local computers.

Fifteen years later, Wilkins and his technical associates remain the core of the management team that led the small data-processing subsidiary to national prominence as a leading high-tech company.

CompuServe, Inc., headquartered in Columbus, has broadened its scope from the days when it was recognized as a "time-sharing" company. The company now offers services in videotex, network communication, and even education.

CompuServe, ranked ninth among similar computer-service companies, reached just over \$37 million in revenues in 1982 and is growing at an average yearly rate of 20 percent, which is the same growth the industry as a whole is experiencing. It employs more than five hundred people, most of whom work at corporate headquarters

in Columbus. The computer center houses some twenty-six Digital Equipment Corporation mainframe computers, capable of processing 30 billion characters of information.

CompuServe outgrew its parent company in 1975 and "spun off" to become a public company with stock traded over-the-counter. In May 1980 CompuServe merged with H&R Block to become a subsidiary.

Currently, CompuServe reaches about three hundred U.S. cities through its direct telephone network and hundreds more through carrier networks like Tymnet and Telenet. Chances are there's a local telephone number you can call to hook up. Later we'll tell you how.

BE AN EXPLORER!

From time to time in this book, you'll hear us referring to CompuServe as being a kind of "community." This is a common attitude of those who regularly visit this on-line world. After you become familiar with the lay of the land, we think you'll have a sensation of traveling from one place to another. Each service and electronic group has its own personality, very much like the neighborhoods in a metropolis. In fact, some of the early CompuServe subscribers have dubbed their electronic environment "Micropolis."

But, unlike real brick-and-mortar communities, Micropolis is in a constant state of change in these, its formative years. The people at CompuServe regularly add new features and improve old ones. This is one of the things that we found most appealing in our exploration of the system.

However, that does cause something of a problem for those of us trying to write books about CompuServe. No matter how quickly you get into print, there's a chance that some of your material might be outdated because someone at CompuServe has added a feature or found a better way to do something, which might involve a changed command or the way a feature appears on the screen.

We've tried to make this book as up-to-date as possible. However, it's only fair to warn you that the electronic landscape may have changed slightly since your faithful scouts last passed through a particular area.

Still, if you really take to heart what we'll show you here, this shouldn't upset you. While we'll have specific examples of how to navigate CompuServe, what we really want to show you is the structure. And the structure of the system won't be changing, even if a few minor commands do. In other words, if you get the idea of how to

move from one area to another, a small change in commands shouldn't throw you a curve. And we've noticed that whenever CompuServe makes changes in command structure, it usually allows users to enter either the old commands or the new ones.

In fact, instead of being upset by changes, we hope you're challenged by them. After all, you are a pioneer—one of the first 25 percent of microcomputer owners in the country to immigrate to these shores. According to industry estimates, there will be many waves of newcomers behind you.

It's our goal not only to show specific commands for reaching popular features, like the CB Simulation, on-line games, and the special-interest groups, but to give you enough information to allow you to continue the expedition on your own.

Yes, it will cost you a few dollars. Connect time is \$6 an hour in non-prime time (after 6:00 P.M. weeknights and all day Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays). And there's a surcharge if you're connecting to CompuServe through a carrier like Tymnet or Telenet.

But let's make a pact. We promise to show you how to save time and money by using the system wisely. We'll show how to navigate it quickly so that you won't burn up your time and money in places you don't want to be, or worse, wander aimlessly, lost at sea.

In exchange, we'd like you to promise not to be a clock watcher during the on-line tours we'll take together. We've designed these group excursions to show you key sections of the system. There are about a half-dozen major field trips scheduled. Each lasts about an hour. At the current rates, it comes to about \$36 worth of time (not counting surcharges for Tymnet or Telenet). Now, we humbly suggest that's less than 5 percent of the costs you would rack up if you tried to find these areas on your own (at least, based on our experiences of exploring without a map).

It's an investment. Spend the time with us now and you'll get it back in savings later.

CHAPTER 2

The Bill of Fare at Chez CompuServe

Herc's a riddle for you:

How is CompuServe like a restaurant?

Is your answer that restaurants serve bites of food and CompuServe serves bytes of information? That's clever—but not the point.

No, the answer is that restaurants and CompuServe are both "menu driven." On second thought, the first answer was probably better, but it has no relevance whatsoever to this chapter.

This chapter is about menus—what they mean in computer language and how they fit into the scheme of things at CompuServe. If you've had any experience at all with computers, you probably know about menus. Most user-friendly programs contain them. But if you're not thoroughly familiar with menus, you need to read this chapter carefully. Even if you are familiar with menus, it's best to review how CompuServe uses them.

First, let's talk about menus at a restaurant. They're more than something to look at while you have a martini. They give you information. They tell you at a glance what the restaurant has and what it doesn't have in the way of food.

In many restaurants they serve another purpose. Say, for example, you're in a French restaurant and the menu lists some unpronounceable dish. Something like "Escargot à la Française avec pomme de terre à la Normandy." You want to try that dish, so when the waiter arrives you have three options:

—Try to pronounce the name of the dish as the French would and perhaps make a fool of yourself.

—Translate to English by saying, "I'll take the Normandy-style

snails and potatoes." But that sounds so unappetizing, it might even make the waiter ill.

—Look at the little number to the left of the description and whisper discretely, "I'll take number 3."

That last option has a lot of appeal. It makes the waiter happy, it makes your dining friends happy, and it strips away the fluff to get to the heart of the matter. The waiter marks a big 3 on his tablet and brings you snails and potatoes, aka "number 3."

Now that's an example of a menu-driven restaurant. The whole system at the eatery is designed to operate around those little slips of paper with numbers on them. Maybe the chef is French and doesn't understand a word of English. But he knows the number 3. And when he sees it, he heads for the pot of snails. And when the cashier sees 3 on the slip, he knows to charge \$29.95. Those numbers are perfectly integrated into the restaurant's delivery system.

So, do they have snails on CompuServe?

No, but they do have menus—lots and lots of menus. And as a new CompuServe user, the first expression of gratitude you'll probably have will be "Thanks for the menus." After all, going into CompuServe for the first time is sort of like your maiden voyage into a French restaurant. You may be unsure what or how to order. That's why the numbered menus in CompuServe are as helpful as the numbered menus in a new restaurant.

Once you enter CompuServe, one of the first things you'll see is a numbered menu. For example, every time you log on to CompuServe, here is the menu you will see:

CompuServe Page CIS-1

CompuServe Information Service

- 1 Home Services
- 2 Business & Financial
- 3 Personal Computing
- 4 Services for Professionals
- 5 The Electronic Mall (tm)

- 6 User Information
- 7 Index

Enter your selection number,
or H for more information.

!

Your options all along the path will be outlined on the screen in numbered menu form. You don't have to be able to speak the

CompuServe computer's language to tell CompuServe what to do or where to go. You need only to type a number after the exclamation point and hit the ENTER or RETURN key on your computer.

When you see the menu on the screen, think of a waiter standing at your table with pad in hand, patiently waiting for a single instruction: "I'll take number 3." And the emphasis here is on *patient*. Don't feel as if the CompuServe computer is tapping its foot and thinking, "Hurry up, dummy. I've got another table to wait on!" It's waiting for your instructions and will wait, usually up to fifteen minutes, between the commands you enter before it gets edgy and disconnects you from the system. Even if you are disconnected, you only need to call back. All is forgiven.

Once you enter the number corresponding to your choice, however, the computer doesn't dally. It starts on the path to your selection. Usually, that's another menu.

Menu-driven CompuServe will allow you to "fine-tune" your request, or to home in on what you want by "stepping" through a series of menus. In fact, you can get to nearly all services that CompuServe offers simply by going from the main menu to a submenu to a sub-submenu. And you get there by typing one number after another, and pressing the ENTER key after each selection. When you run out of menus, you have arrived.

Sounds complicated, you say? Not really. You'll only see one menu at a time. Look at that top menu again. One of the menu items is called Home Services. But Home Services are many, indeed—hundreds, in fact. So, if you enter the number for Home Services, you'll be taken to another menu which lists *only* the main Home Services categories available.

CompuServe

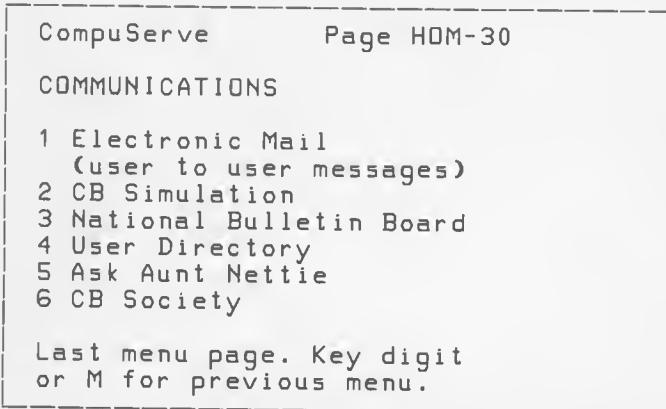
Page HOM-1

HOME SERVICES

- 1 News/Weather/Sports
- 2 Reference Library
- 3 Communications
- 4 Home Shopping/Banking
- 5 Discussion Forums
- 6 Games
- 7 Education
- 8 Home Management
- 9 Travel
- 10 Entertainment

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

Ah! That's the very last menu on CompuServe, right? After all, it says it's the "last menu page." Not exactly. That only means that there are no more options under the Home Services main menu. There are more branches from this Home Services main menu. For instance, if you choose number 3—Communications—you'll receive a menu like this:



And so it goes. If you continue to use CompuServe, you'll soon find these menus tiresome, time-consuming, and money-consuming. You may long for a faster way to get around in the system. There is a faster way, and later on we'll show you several good express lines around CompuServe. But don't worry about that now. Let's start out by using the menus as the guide wires they were designed to be.

But can't one get lost in this labyrinth of menus? Not really, especially if you take time in your early experience to read each menu completely before placing your order. If there are nine items on the menu and you read down to number 3 and it looks interesting, don't enter a 3 until you have read all nine items. The more familiar you get with all the menus, the faster you will learn what the system has to offer.

If you still find moments of confusion, remember that in most places in CompuServe, you're only one command away from either a series of statements or command options that will flash on your screen to give you help.

Lots of times, simply entering a blank line (which is done by hitting the ENTER or RETURN key once) will return you to a menu. Occasionally you may have to enter an M or other command.

SO THIS IS HELP??

Occasionally, you'll not get a menu when you want one. Instead, you'll get a few lines offering you help. Think of these help lines as that waiter at the French restaurant telling you what number 3 really is, in English no less.

Sometimes waiters seem a bit put off by being forced to give you that information. Don't worry. CompuServe is happy to supply you with the help you need. Again, read the help information carefully when it comes up on your screen. Take your time. Nobody is standing over you with a stopwatch. You're not being primed for a pop quiz. It isn't a preliminary to a TV game show. It's what it says it is. It's help.

But sometimes you'll get a little surprise. You'll read the help file and find that it really doesn't help much. It may seem you need a dictionary of computer language to understand the language of the help lines. Talk about frustration! It's as if you've just asked the waiter in the French restaurant to explain the entree in English and he starts speaking Yiddish.

CompuServe is still evolving and probably will be evolving as long as there is a CompuServe. The service has the best of intentions by putting these help files in the system. But even some of the folks at CompuServe admit the help files are imperfect. True, they were written by people who know the system inside and out. They know the system like you know the back of your hand. Then why can't they explain it?

Okay. Here's why. Sit down sometime and try to write a description of the back of your hand that makes sense to a space creature who not only has never seen the back of your hand but has never seen a hand.

Case closed.

So what do you do when help lines don't help? One of the best things to do is to get back to a menu somewhere and have another stab at coming in the front door, as it were. Sometimes simply going out and coming in again will give you a new perspective on where you are and what you are doing.

If you're still lost, you can get help by dialing CompuServe's toll-free customer-service number (800-848-8990 outside of Ohio; 614-457-8650 for Ohio residents) and asking for help. But if that doesn't satisfy your desire to let someone know you're less than impressed with the on-line help, we'll explain later how you can use a

feature called Feedback to address an on-line letter to CompuServe which might say:

"Dear CompuServe: You call THAT help?"

And CompuServe wants your comments. After all, it's not to CompuServe's advantage to have its customers confused. The implementation of the menu-driven system is proof that CompuServe wants to make it as easy as possible to get around Micropolis. CompuServe people are constantly reviewing the service and they change it when they find its shortcomings.

That's why you must be prepared for changes in the system, sometimes from one day to the next. Usually these changes will be announced appropriately in the section of the system devoted to new things on CompuServe.

But all this is part of the excitement of this new way of communicating and retrieving information. There's no chance to blow the whistle and call everything to a halt for a week or two while computer wizards peek, poke, rewire, and grumble their way toward a better system. In fact, they're probably working on it as you're using it—like a mechanic who stands on the motor of your automobile and fine-tunes it as you drive cross-country.

What excitement! And what more could you ask from this new form of communication?

CHAPTER 3

One Small Step (Our First Tour)

We've gotten the preliminaries out of the way. Now it's time to go "on-line." As we've said, this book is designed as a tour guide. If you let us walk along together, you will learn quickly how to navigate the menu roads in CompuServe.

This chapter will include your first on-line tour. It's a long one—we'll be on-line about one hour—and it will give you an idea of how subsequent tours will be conducted. During this tour, we'll see how the system is organized, catch up on a little news, write a letter, and even play a few hands of blackjaek. But first, decide where you're going to put the book so you can see it while you push the computer keys.

We assume you have purchased a CompuServe Information Service starter kit. All kits include one very important piece of paper called a "snap pack." This snappy little envelope includes your CompuServe user identification number, your secret password, a form you must fill in and send to CompuServe to continue your service, and the terms and conditions of the service.

When you open the envelope, you'll see a piece of paper that has a number and two unrelated words on it. These items are what you need to get into CompuServe the first time. The number is yours forever. The password is temporary. It will change once you fill out the form and send it back to CompuServe.

Your starter kit also probably includes a list of phone numbers where you can call CompuServe from most major cities in the United States. In terms of phones, there are three major phone links to CompuServe. The CompuServe "node" is best. That's a direct local connection between your town and CompuServe. If the list indicates

you have a CompuServe node number in your area, use it. It will save you money. It means that when you dial the number, you'll be linked directly to the CompuServe computers. It's like having an 800 number directly from your city to CompuServe.

Tymnet and Telenet are different. These are data-transmission services that link terminals to many different types of information services and databases. You can use these two services to link up with the Source, Dow Jones News/Retrieval Service, etc. Tymnet and Telenet do not own information services. They simply provide the phone links. They make their money by charging for the use of their lines. They both charge by the hour. This surcharge—usually \$2 an hour—will be added to your CompuServe monthly bill if you have to use one of them.

FIRE UP YOUR MACHINE

Okay, let's get started. Turn on your computer and load your communications program. While it's loading, let's talk about what's going on when your computer says, "Hello, Columbus!"

Your program will be (or should be) communicating in "full duplex." What that means is this: After you're connected to CompuServe, the letters and numbers you type on your keyboard are transmitted to Columbus and then echoed (or bounced back) and displayed on your screen. In other words, in most cases when you are on-line, what you see on the screen is *not* coming directly from your keyboard but rather is an echo of what CompuServe thinks you've typed.

Sometimes, especially on very busy evenings, you may type a command, which appears on the screen, and nothing seems to happen. It appears as if the CompuServe system has ignored you. In most cases it hasn't. When there are a lot of people on-line at the same time, the system becomes sluggish, and it may take anywhere from several seconds to a minute or more to register your command. As long as the CompuServe system has echoed your command, however, it has most likely noted your command and will get around to it as soon as it can.

The echo is a report of how you're being received on the other end. If what you see on the screen is not what you're typing, then you know immediately you have a problem. If that ever happens to you, in this chapter or anywhere along the line in this book, turn at once to the On-line Survival Kit in our back pages. Look up the section called "Trouble Shooting" and see if we've addressed your

problem there. If not, call the customer-service representatives of CompuServe at 800-848-8990. That's why they are there.

After your terminal program has loaded, you'll need to call the connection number in your area if you do not own an auto-dial modem, or give the phone number to your auto-dial modem if you own one. For those with manual modems, you should wait till you hear the high-pitched tone on the other end of the line before switching your modem to the originate mode.

LOGGING ON THROUGH A COMPUSERVE NODE

If you are dialing a CompuServe node number, the tone you hear will be CompuServe's computer answering. Assuming your modem is on, enter a CONTROL C on your keyboard. This usually is done by holding down the CONTROL key while tapping the C key. If you've done it right, you'll see the words "User ID:" appear on the screen. (If your computer doesn't have a key labeled CONTROL, check your owners' manual to see what combination of keys serve as a CONTROL. For example, the early TRS-80 computers don't have a CONTROL key per se. However, you can use the SHIFT and the down arrow, so that CONTROL C is "SHIFT/down arrow/C" entered at the same time. This is important. CONTROL keys are used throughout the system and you need to know how to issue that command with your computer.) You can now jump ahead to the section called "All Together Now . . ." which follows shortly.

LOGGING ON THROUGH TYMNET AND TELNET

If you are using Tymnet or Telenet, the procedure is a little different, but it will get you to the same place. First of all, the tone you hear when you dial your connect number isn't CompuServe talking, but Tymnet or Telenet, and you will need to have your computer tell the service that you want to talk to CompuServe (sort of like the old telephone-operator system—"Give me Lakeside 474 . . ." etc.).

If you're using Tymnet, the first message you'll see after you connect via modem is "PLEASE TYPE YOUR TERMINAL IDENTIFIER." Hmm! Is this a test? What's a terminal identifier? In 9.9

cases out of 10, Tymnet wants you to type an A. If it's A, you've answered correctly and you'll see the message "PLEASE LOG IN." If you don't get the log-in message, check your computer dealer to determine what kind of terminal identifier you should use.

Remember how we said that Tymnet links with lots of different services and databases? Tymnet is asking you which one you want. At this point, you should type one of the following—CIS02, CIS03, or CPS01—and press ENTER. All of those are data channels which flow into CompuServe. It's possible you may get a message such as "LOCAL OUT OF CHANNELS" or "SLOT OUT OF PORTS." Those messages are the same thing as busy signals. It means all the lines into CompuServe are busy and you should keep trying.

If all the lines aren't busy and everything is working, you'll see the "User ID:" prompt. You have arrived at the door to CompuServe. If so, jump ahead to the "All Together Now . . ." section (below).

Now for you Telenet users, you have yet another way to log on. After your modem has connected, tap the ENTER key twice. Then you'll see the prompt "TERMINAL=". In almost all cases, you type D1 and press ENTER. Next you'll see an @ symbol. You should type either C 202202 and press ENTER or C 614227 and press ENTER.

Finally, Canadian readers: You may be logging on via DataPac. See the on-line survival kit in the back of the book for your log-on instructions, then join us in the next section.

ALL TOGETHER NOW . . .

This ought to bring all of us to CompuServe's front door where there's the sign "User ID:".

Here is where you need to put the book on your knee or somewhere nearby so you can see the book and the computer screen. The on-line tour is about to begin.

Type your user ID exactly as it appears in your starter kit, comma and all. Then press ENTER. (On some computers, it's called RETURN, but for consistency we'll be using the word ENTER in this book.)

Next, you'll be asked to enter your password. Do this now, just exactly as it came in the starter kit, complete with the character that separates the two words. As you type, you'll notice the letters don't appear on the screen as your user ID did. That's for your protection. It keeps someone from looking over your shoulder while you type and memorizing your all-important secret password.

If you get a message saying something about an "invalid entry,"

it's likely you entered the password incorrectly. Try again. If you still get an "invalid entry," check the number you entered. It could be you entered the wrong number. Type a CONTROL C. You'll get another user ID: prompt and you can start over again.

When you give the CompuServe computer the correct password that goes with your number, the door will be opened for you and you'll officially be on-line.

We're going to assume at this point that you've never connected to CompuServe before and walk you through the sign-up procedure. If, on the other hand, you have already peeked into CompuServe with this user ID number, then chances are you've already gone through the following little initiation. If that's the case, you might want to just skim the next few paragraphs (for old time's sake) and then rejoin us at the next section, entitled "From the Top."

Newcomers: Don't expect a red carpet. No champagne broken over your computer screen. No bells and whistles. Just more log-on duties. The message will read:

THERE ARE A VARIETY OF TERMINALS
AND PERSONAL COMPUTERS WHICH MAY BE
USED TO ACCESS COMPUVERSE. SINCE
DIFFERENT TERMINALS HAVE DIFFERENT
FEATURES, EACH USER SHOULD SET
THEIR TERMINAL TYPE TO GET THE MOST
FROM THE COMPUVERSE SERVICE.

KEY S OR <ENTER> TO CONTINUE

Despite the bad grammar and the rather cold greeting, you should now press ENTER to see the next screen.

- 0 EXPLANATION OF TERMINAL TYPES
- 1 VIDTEX COMPATIBLE SOFTWARE
- 2 ANSI COMPATIBLE (VT100)
- 3 TELERAY 1061
- 4 OTHER

Here, CompuServe needs to know what kind of machine you're using. You should tap 0 and ENTER to see an explanation of this puzzle. When you do, you'll see a screen of explanation. To see another screen, press ENTER again. Here's some help in making your decision about what number you ultimately should select.

If you have Vidtex terminal software, the kind CompuServe markets (or something that resembles it), you should tap 1 and press ENTER. If you have a VT-100 terminal, type 2 and ENTER. If you have a Teleray 1061 unit, tap 3 and ENTER. If your machine doesn't seem to fall into any of these categories, press 4 and ENTER.

If you make a mistake, it isn't irreversible. Your machine won't fall apart. You won't be given a bad grade. In fact, you'll probably still be able to access CompuServe, just not as efficiently. As you learn more about your terminal software and CompuServe, you can reset all this later.

Once you enter a 1, 2, 3, or 4, you'll finally get a little warmth from CompuServe.

Congratulations! Welcome to the exciting world of CompuServe Information Service. We are continually adding new services and we urge you to check "What's New" frequently.

Key <ENTER> for next page:

CompuServe sometimes uses the word *key* to mean "press a key." You'll see that a lot. So go ahead and press the ENTER key after you finish reading what's on the screen.

Next you'll be given several screens of information about how much free time you'll get with the number you have (if any), how to become a permanent CompuServe subscriber, a little about the operating rules, a warning about protecting your password, etc. And you'll be told that certain services will be unavailable to you until you go through the entire sign-up procedure. After you read each screen, just press ENTER for the next page.

Finally, you'll be asked if you want to start the sign-up procedure or go directly to the menu. You don't have to sign up until your free time runs out. But the sooner you sign up permanently, the quicker you'll be able to use all of CompuServe's services. When you choose to sign up, here are some things you ought to know.

Part of the sign-up procedure is completed on-line and part of it is written on the form in your starter kit and returned to CompuServe via mail. The on-line part of the sign-up is not complicated. All you do is answer questions—your name and address, how you want to be billed, etc. You can stop the procedure at several points. It's no more complicated than signing up for a utility service, except that you type answers to questions instead of having a clerk ask the questions and write them down for you. If you make a mistake, the system will give you another try.

Until you sign up for continued CompuServe service, you will not be able to send or receive electronic mail. Electronic mail is one stop in this on-line tour. But if you are ineligible to use electronic mail, just skip the section on electronic mail and come back to it when you have signed up.

Most CompuServe starter kits offer the purchaser an hour or two of free time. If you sign on immediately, you will not lose that free time. It is credited to your user ID when you log on, so signing up for continued service immediately after you log on won't take that free time away from you.

Now we're ready to choose the number that takes us to the menu. Before you get there, you'll see the latest "What's New." This is the CompuServe bulletin board, updated weekly, where you'll see news of the latest additions and attractions on CompuServe. You'll automatically see this list the first two times you log on after each update. It's a good idea to check the messages related to these headlines often. What's New will tip you off to any systems changes.

But this time, we'll skip the actual What's New messages and get on to the main part of our tour.

FROM THE TOP

Tap the ENTER key to continue, just as the last line at the bottom of the page says. When you do, you'll see the first menu:

CompuServe	Page CIS-1
CompuServe Information Service	
1 Home Services	
2 Business & Financial	
3 Personal Computing	
4 Services for Professionals	
5 The Electronic Mall (tm)	
6 User Information	
7 Index	
Enter your selection number, or H for more information.	
!	

If that looks familiar, it's because we displayed this menu in the last chapter. This is the top menu, the main one from which all CompuServe services spring.

Now, what about that exclamation point at the bottom? That's where the number or command will appear when you enter it. Depending on your system, the exclamation point may be at the bottom of the page or it may be two or three lines up from the bottom of the page to the right of the menu.

Speaking of commands, when it's a letter or series of letters you're supposed to enter, it makes no difference if the letter is a capital or lowercase letter. The system understands both to mean the same letter.

During this first tour, we're going to concentrate on the various home services available on CompuServe. These include some of the most general services, as you'll see in a moment. This isn't to say you couldn't use these services in your work or education. Let's take a look at the Home Services menu. To get there, type 1 and ENTER. You'll see this:

CompuServe	Page HOM-1
HOME SERVICES	
1 News/Weather/Sports 2 Reference Library 3 Communications 4 Home Shopping/Banking 5 Discussion Forums 6 Games 7 Education 8 Home Management 9 Travel 10 Entertainment	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

It says it's the last menu page. Don't take that literally. What that means is that this is the entire menu for page HOM-1. Menus for some sections are so long, it takes two screens to show them all.

ALL THE NEWS ...

If you were to type *M* and ENTER right now, you would be taken back to the previous menu which, in this case, is the entry menu. But let's not do that. Instead, type 1 and ENTER. That will take us immediately to the News/Weather/Sports area (without the film at eleven).

Next you'll see the menu for page HOM-10 which is page 10 of the Home Services section, something like this:

CompuServe

Page HOM-10

NEWS/WEATHER/SPORTS

News Services

- 1 The Washington Post (\$)
- 2 St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- 3 AP Videotex Wire

- 4 NOAA Weather Wire
- 5 Official PGA Tour Guide
- 6 Hollywood Hotline (\$)
- 7 American Ski Association

\$ Indicates surcharged service

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

First, we're going to look at the AP Videotex service. This is a service of the Associated Press which contains news written especially for information services such as CompuServe. The information is delivered to CompuServe at approximately the same time it is released to newspapers and TV stations.

Type 3 and ENTER, and here's what you should see:

AP Videotex

Page APV-1

Associated Press News Highlights

1 Latest News- Update Hourly	7 Entertainment
2 Weather	8 Business News
3 National	9 Wall Street
4 Washington	10 Dow Jones Avg
5 World	11 Feature News
6 Political	12 History

Key <Enter> for Sports

!

The menu is too long for one screen. In this case, if you were to simply push ENTER, you would see the sports menu items. Let's look at the latest updated news. Type 1 and ENTER.

Depending on what time of the day you enter the Newsbriefs menu, you'll see a list of Newsbriefs, each with a different number. It may look something like this:

AP Videotex

Page APV-2109

9 22nd Newsbrief
0 21st Newsbrief
1 20th Newsbrief

Input a number or key
<ENTER> for more choices

!

Usually, you'll be most interested in the latest Newsbriefs. So, enter the number that appears at the top of the menu. In our example, that is 9. When you make the selection, one screen of Newsbriefs will display on your screen. At the bottom of the screen, you'll see:

Key S or <ENTER> to continue

!

Don't tap ENTER yet. This time, we'll be typing a new command—S—before pushing ENTER. The S command allows material to scroll up your screen to the end of that information. Scrolling means that new lines of information appear at the bottom of your screen and, after each line is displayed to the end, it and all the lines above it move up the screen to make way for a new line. In this case, the information will scroll up the screen at a rate so the average reader shouldn't have trouble reading it. Once you press the S and push ENTER, you'll not get another message about what do to until the entire Newsbriefs has scrolled to the end.

But don't tap S <ENTER> yet either. Before you do, you should know you're going to get a chance to use two important CONTROL codes—CONTROL S and CONTROL Q—during this scrolling exercise.

If you are in the middle of a scroll and you type CONTROL S, the screen freezes. That gives you a chance to read something again and again until you understand it. To start the screen scrolling again, type CONTROL Q. These two CONTROL codes work everywhere in CompuServe. Remember, CONTROL S to stop (or freeze) the screen; CONTROL Q to "quit stopping," or resume the display.

And you don't have to tap ENTER after these, or any other CONTROL codes.

Okay! Ready?

Type S and ENTER.

Type CONTROL S (the scrolling will stop).

Type CONTROL Q (the scrolling will start again).

Use the CONTROL codes a few times until you are familiar with them. Eventually, you'll see the message:

Last page. Key M for menu

!

That means you are at the end of the Newsbriefs. Type *M* and ENTER and you'll go back to the last menu you saw before you started scrolling Newsbriefs.

AP Videotex Page APV-1

Associated Press News Highlights

1 Latest News-	7 Entertainment
Update Hourly	
2 Weather	8 Business News
3 National	9 Wall Street
4 Washington	10 Dow Jones Avg
5 World	11 Feature News
6 Political	12 History

Key <ENTER> for Sports

!

Type *M* and press ENTER again and you're back to the menu just above this one.

CompuServe Page HOM-10

NEWS/WEATHER/SPORTS

News Services

- 1 The Washington Post (\$)
- 2 St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- 3 AP Videotex Wire

- 4 NOAA Weather Wire
- 5 Official PGA Tour Guide
- 6 Hollywood Hotline (\$)
- 7 American Ski Association

\$ Indicates surcharged service

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Take a moment to notice the many news services available here. Also notice that two of them have surcharges connected with them. That means if you use them, you'll be charged extra, above and beyond the basic connect charge. Those surcharges will be added to your CompuServe bill.

WEATHER WATCHING

Now, let's take a look at another kind of database, where you command a search for specific information. In this case, you'll be checking your own state's weather forecast. To do that, type 4 and press ENTER at the exclamation mark. Next you will see:

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please

What's happening? Have you given CompuServe a problem? No. CompuServe isn't located on a single giant computer, but a number of computers all linked together. When you see this message, it means that you are being transferred to another computer (or host) where the requested service is located.

In time you will see:

Thank You for Waiting

It means you have arrived at the other computer and the information you want is near.

In this case, here's what you will see:

CompuServe	Page WEA-1
WEATHER	Page WX-3
1 State Forecasts	
2 Extended Forecasts	
3 Forecast Explanation	
4 Probability of Precip.	
5 Marine Forecasts	
6 Sports Forecasts	
8 Weather Warnings	
12 Aviation Weather Menu	

Selection:

This time the exclamation mark is gone. In its place is a colon. But the system is still looking for a command. Since you want to see the state forecast, type 1 and press ENTER. The following will appear:

```
STATE FCSTS  
Enter identifiers  
or <H> for HELP
```

ID:

What the program is asking for is one of fifty two-letter postal codes which each state has been assigned. Once you type in one of these two-letter codes and press ENTER, the forecast for that state scrolls up the screen. So, go ahead! Put in your own state's two-letter code and press ENTER. (The codes are the same as the post office's state codes.)

If you had asked for the Ohio forecast on the afternoon of Sept. 19, 1983, by typing OH and ENTER you would have seen:

CLE 192000

STATE FORECAST FOR OHIO
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CLEVELAND
OH
405PM EDT MON SEP 19 1983

PARTLY CLOUDY TONIGHT WITH A CHANCE
OF SHOWERS OR THUNDERSTORMS
NORTHWEST BY MORNING. LOWS IN THE
60S. SHOWERS AND THUNDERSTORMS
SPREADING ACROSS THE REST OF THE
STATE TUESDAY. HIGHS IN THE MID 70S
TO THE MID 80S. SHOWERS OR
THUNDERSTORMS LIKELY TUESDAY NIGHT
AND TURNING COOLER. LOWS IN THE MID
40S TO THE MID 50S. LINGERING
SHOWERS EAST AND PARTIAL CLEARING
WEST WEDNESDAY. COOL WITH HIGHS IN
THE UPPER 50S TO MID 60S.

RDP
ID:

The letters RDP at the end are the initials of the forecaster. But what about that ID: prompt you get at the end of the forecast? Does it expect you to give another two-letter code? And can you break out

of this cycle or must you spend the rest of your unnatural computer life whirling in a maze of forecasts?

The answer is simple. When you press ENTER without a code at the ID: prompt, the program knows you are finished. In fact, do that now. Press ENTER and you'll be back to the menu that got you here in the first place. Press ENTER again at the Selection: prompt and you'll be back to the News/Weather/Sports menu.

If you were to type **M** (for menu) and ENTER at the News/Weather/Sports menu, you would start "backing out" of the menus until you got all the way to the top menu again. But instead of doing that, why not take the "express"?

To do that, type **T** and press ENTER at the exclamation mark.

Would you look at that? You've bypassed several layers of menus all the way to CompuServe's front door again. The **T** command from any exclamation mark takes you back to the top menu, no matter where you are. It's helpful when you've taken the wrong menu road and find yourself in foreign territory or find that you zipped when you should have zagged somewhere along the road. Remember, in CompuServe, **T** stands for Top menu.

A LITTLE GAME OF CHANCE

Now that you're at the familiar top menu again, type **1** and press ENTER for Home Services. In a moment, you'll see the Home Services menu again.

CompuServe Page HOM-1

HOME SERVICES

- 1 News/Weather/Sports
- 2 Reference Library
- 3 Communications
- 4 Home Shopping/Banking
- 5 Discussion Forum
- 6 Games
- 7 Education
- 8 Home Management
- 9 Travel
- 10 Entertainment

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Next we're going to the Games section, one of the most popular areas of CompuServe. It is said that even those who sign up for professional, education, or communication reasons eventually wind up in the games area from time to time for a little rest and relaxation. It's little wonder that there are scores of games and more being added every week. We'll devote an entire chapter to games later on.

The first menu page of games looks something like this:

CompuServe Games	Page GAM-1
Games and Entertainment	
1 Board Games	
2 Parlor Games	
3 Sports Games	
4 Games of Chance	
5 Adventure Games	
6 War Games/Simulations	
7 Space Games	
8 Educational Games	
9 Fortune Telling Games	
10 Game SIGs and Archives	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

We're searching for the single-player blackjack game in which the computer acts as the dealer-opponent. It would be under Games of Chance, so select option 4, and the system will display:

CompuServe Games	Page GAM-7
Games of Chance	
1 Multiplayer Casino Blackjack	
2 Roulette	
3 Craps	
4 Bridge	
5 Single-player Blackjack	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	

There it is. It's number 5 on this page. So type 5 and press ENTER. You'll see something like this:

CompuServe Games Page GAM-60

Blackjack

- 1 To Read Instructions
- 2 To Play Blackjack

Suggested Age : 12 & Up
Classification : Card Game
Players (min/max) : 1/1
Special Requirements: None
Minimum Screen Width: Any
Direct Access Page : GO GAM-202

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

You may know how to play blackjack, but remember, playing blackjack on CompuServe is different from playing blackjack in a casino. So it's always a good idea to read the instructions that go with CompuServe games. Type 1 and press ENTER to see the instructions.

CompuServe Games Page GAM-102

Blackjack

The object is getting as close to
21 without going over. The computer
will take a card at 16 and hold at
17.

Take another card . . . ENTER 1
No more cards ENTER 0
CONTROL-C to exit game
Good Luck!

Last page. Key M for menu.

!

Type M and press ENTER to get back to the introductory page for blackjack (GAM-60, in this example; it may be different on your screen if CompuServe has added games to the section since this writing).

This time, type 2 and press ENTER to play the blackjack game. The limit you can bet is \$500. Remember to type 1 and press ENTER when you want another card (a hit) or 0 and ENTER when you don't want another card. When the computer asks you the time, it isn't a

test. Just enter the approximate time in military-style. And remember to press ENTER after every number or set of numbers that you enter.

Go ahead. Play a couple of hands if you like. The money you're betting is "play money." If you lose, it's not going to be added on to your CompuServe bill. And if you win, don't expect a check from CompuServe.

When you've finished, enter a CONTROL C. That ought to take you back to the first game page.

TAKING CONTROL

Now we're going to return to CompuServe's top menu again. You could simply type T and press ENTER. But before you do that, enter another CONTROL C at the exclamation mark. You'll get a message like this:

```
^C Interrupt, H for HELP,  
T for TOP, M for prior MENU  
!
```

The little caret symbol (^) before the C is the standard symbol for CONTROL. It means the CONTROL C you sent has been received by CompuServe and it has interrupted everything.

Interrupt? Did you do something to the entire system? Are you going to be charged extra because you interrupted something?

Not at all. This demonstrates a very valuable function of CONTROL C. No matter where you are in the system, no matter what is going on, entering a CONTROL C will bring everything to a halt on your end.

Think of a CONTROL C as a parachute. If you're in the midst of something you want to get out of, or if you are profoundly lost in the depths of the system and there seems to be no way out, pull the CONTROL C ripcord. Depending on where you are in the system, you'll get one of several messages. But all of them give you options for escaping.

You don't need to be at a prompt to enter a CONTROL C. It will work while you are scrolling through information. It will work in the middle of a game (as you saw with blackjack). It will work anywhere and everywhere to give you options.

Now, type T and press ENTER to go back to the top menu.

CompuServe Page CIS-1

CompuServe Information Service

- 1 Home Services
- 2 Business & Financial
- 3 Personal Computing
- 4 Services for Professionals
- 5 The Electronic Mall (tm)

- 6 User Information
- 7 Index

Enter your selection number,
or H for more information.

!

This time, we're going to a new area off the main menu. It's the Index, another searchable database that allows you to search for the various CompuServe services by typing in a word that describes that service.

To get to the Index from this top menu, type 6 and press ENTER to see the following:

CompuServe Page IND-1

INDEX

- 1 Search for Topics of Interest
- 2 List ALL Indexed Topics
- 3 Quick Index List
- 4 Explanation of Index

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

You're going to use the Index to find your way to the last stop on this tour—the electronic post office. So, you'll want to "Search for Topics of Interest." Type 1 and press ENTER. You'll see the following:

Enter topic (i.e. stocks)

:

The prompt has changed again. It's a colon, just as it was in the weather-forecast area. But unlike the weather-forecast program, this program accepts many more than fifty words. For example, you want to know where to find the electronic post office so that you can post some electronic mail.

Type MAIL and press ENTER. The Index program will respond:

1 EMAIL EMA

Last Menus page. Key digit
or M for previous menu!

What does that mean? It means the service you probably want is called Electronic Mail and it's located on page EMA. The page number is usually a combination of letters and numbers found in the top right-hand corner of the screen. In this case, the page identifier is three letters only with no numbers.

At this point, you could type 1 and ENTER at the exclamation point and you would be taken directly to Electronic Mail. But instead of that, we're going to try something else. We're going to type GO EMA and ENTER. Does that mean there's another way of zipping around the system besides traveling the long winding menu roads? That's exactly what it means.

The GO command can save you much time and money. To see how it works, type GO EMA or simply G EMA (a shorter but acceptable version) from the colon prompt. You'll see the following:

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please
Thank You for Waiting

While you're waiting for the system to transfer you to another host computer, here's a little more information on the Index. It won't search every word you can think of. If you type in a word it doesn't know, it will tell you it doesn't understand and ask you for another word. To get out of the Index program and back to the main Index menu, simply press ENTER, leaving a blank line, as you did in the weather-forecast program.

SIT RIGHT DOWN AND WRITE YOURSELF AN EMAIL

Okay! When you see the following, you'll be ready to write your first electronic letter.

CompuServe Page EMA-1

Electronic Mail Main Menu

- 1 Read mail
- 2 Compose and send mail

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Since you're going to compose a letter to yourself, type 2 and press ENTER to see the following menu:

CompuServe Page EMA-4

CREATE a new message in your
temporary workspace using:

- 1 EDIT (F11GE)
- 2 ICS
- 3 File from disk space

EDIT message in workspace using:

- 4 EDIT (F11GE)
- 5 ICS

6 SEND message from workspace

7 Information on EDIT (F11GE)

8 Information on ICS

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Now, don't panic if the menu on your screen doesn't look exactly like the one we have here. As we've said, CompuServe is constantly changing, and while we've tried to use the latest examples on our tours, sometimes change catches up with us. This is a good example. In late 1983 CompuServe officials told us the system would soon stop

using the term "FILGE" (which stands for "FILE Generator and Editor") and rename that feature "Edit." (We certainly can't argue with the simplicity and clarity in that choice!)

Anyway, on your screen, you may see Edit instead of FILGE, and a slightly different menu. The program itself, used for writing Email, is no different—only the names have been changed—so you should have no trouble following our examples. (Now, didn't we tell you that, like any good explorer, you would sometimes have to deal with the unexpected?)

If what you're seeing on your screen is anything like our illustration, it's a perfect example of information overload. The newcomer who wanders into this area without benefit of instruction may well determine this is a special place for a secret guild of double-talking computer experts.

Not so. From this menu, Email can be written, edited, and sent. And the methods for composing letters are explained on help files.

It's very simple. In a moment, you will be going into an area where you'll write your letter. Then you'll come back to this menu to send it. You don't need to understand all the menu items to send letters. And to prove it, select the option that gives you the Edit (or FILGE) program (number 1 in our example) and press ENTER. This means you are requesting to use the word-processing program to write a message. We'll be talking more about the editing program in later chapters.

Next, you'll see the message that lets you know the system is ready to accept your message.

New file Z99EMA.TMP created - ready

You are ready to write the letter. Remember this: Write no more than two hundred characters, spaces, or punctuation marks before pressing the ENTER key. If you go over that limit without pressing ENTER, the program you're writing with is likely to reject your attempt. You can write fewer characters than seventy-nine before pressing ENTER. In fact, it's a good habit to always press ENTER when you come to the end of a line on your own screen, no matter what the screen width. For this exercise, type the following as it is written.

Hi! Welcome to the CompuServe
Information Service. <press ENTER>
You've made amazing progress so
far. But there's much more to
learn. <press ENTER>

If you pressed ENTER after the second sentence, you should be at the beginning of a new line. Now, type /EX. That tells the system you have finished your letter and are ready to exit this temporary file and go back to the prior Email menu.

```
CompuServe      Page EMA-4

CREATE a new message in your
temporary workspace using:
1 EDIT (FILGE)
2 ICS
3 File from disk space
EDIT message in workspace using:
4 EDIT (FILGE)
5 ICS

6 SEND message from workspace
7 Information on EDIT (FILGE)
8 Information on ICS

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!
```

The message you wrote is still located in the special temporary file you created (called your workspace). To send it, type a 6 and press ENTER to see:

```
CompuServe      Page EMA-8

Key <ENTER> to leave; ? for help

Send to User ID
:
```

The system wants to know the user ID number of the intended recipient. Since you're going to mail this to yourself, type in your own user number and the required information on the lines that follow:

```
Subject (32 characters max)
: [Type the word Welcome and press
ENTER]
Your name (32 characters max)
: [Type your own name here and
press ENTER]
Is this correct?
```

Check your entries, paying special attention to the number you entered. If it's not the way you wanted it, type an N and press ENTER and you can start over again. If the address is okay, type a Y and press ENTER to see:

Message awaiting delivery.

Key <ENTER> to continue

!

The letter will be waiting for you the next time you log on. It usually takes about twenty minutes for the system to deliver each letter. We'll see how to pick it up in chapter 5. If you should peek into the system again before our next tour in chapter 5, please don't try to retrieve the letter on your own. We have some plans for it. (Surprises. Don't you love 'em?!)

GOING HOME

If you were to press ENTER at this point, you would go back to the EMA-4 page so that you could write another letter and send it. But this first on-line tour is at an end. It's time to log off the system and there's a proper way to do this.

Now is the time to get in the habit of logging off, rather than just turning off your modem and machine. If you do that, there's a very good chance you'll be charged for up to an additional twenty minutes each time you do. As far as the CompuServe computers are concerned, you are not disconnected until one of two things happen:

—You have typed OFF or BYE and pressed ENTER from an exclamation mark or one of several other locations.

—You have not entered a command for about fifteen minutes.

If you simply turn off your machine and modem, the computer may wait up to twenty minutes before logging you off and you will be charged for that time.

So, type BYE or OFF at the exclamation mark.

The system will tell you the time you are logging off, and the amount of time you have been on the system during this session. After that, you may get another log-on prompt. Don't worry about that. Simply turn your modem off and you'll be disconnected.

Your first on-line tour of CompuServe is complete. You don't look any worse for wear.

CONCLUSION

Now that your first whirlwind tour of the CompuServe Information Service is done, it's time to stop and think about the discoveries you've made.

You've learned that nearly every service that CompuServe has to offer is available by traveling a trail of menus to the final destination. You've learned that while the menus are always there in case you need them as a guide, each service has a page number, or address. And to go to a specific page number, the GO command, followed by the page number, will get you there in a hurry.

You've learned that the exclamation mark is the primary prompt in the system. Whenever you see one of them, you know that CompuServe expects a command. And you know that every command must be followed by pressing the ENTER or RETURN key. That lets the system know that you have finished sending information or commands.

You've learned a little about the games available on CompuServe and how each has its own on-line instructions. You've explored briefly the on-line Index of services and found how to search it for the service you need.

And finally, you've used some very important CONTROL codes and commands which you'll use as long as you use CompuServe:

—T, the "Top" command, will take you to CompuServe's top, or introductory, menu from any exclamation mark, no matter where you are in the system.

—S, the "Scroll" command, allows information to scroll up your computer screen to the end of that information, instead of being presented as a "page" at a time.

—CONTROL S, the "stop" scrolling command, turns off the scroll, freezing the information on the screen so that you can read it.

—CONTROL Q, the "start" scrolling command, starts the screen display scrolling again after using the CONTROL S.

—CONTROL C, CompuServe's universal "bailout" procedure for the hopelessly lost, interrupts any program you're running to give you clear options about what to do next.

CHAPTER 4

Electronic Rendezvous

We took our first on-line tour together in the last chapter. If that was your first small step into CompuServe, you may well be asking yourself now, "Where were all the 100,000 other subscribers these guys have been telling me about?"

True enough. In our first tour we went in CompuServe's front door, strolled all up and down the main streets, and didn't run into another soul. It was almost as if no one were home, wasn't it?

Well, if what you saw in our first tour were all that was available in CompuServe, you wouldn't be reading a book like this. There probably wouldn't be a national excitement about information services, and what CompuServe had to offer could be covered in a comprehensive magazine article.

What makes this brave new world exciting is not just electronic mailing and on-line blackjack games. No, it's something more old-fashioned than that—it's people talking to other people.

In the rest of our visit together, most of our time will be spent showing you the numerous ways CompuServe has come up with to let you talk, play, and work with people all across the country.

Starting in the next chapter, we'll take our first look at electronic conferences, where any number of subscribers can "chat" together by simply typing their messages on the screen and reading the replies.

On down the line, we'll discover electronic clubs and forums called "special-interest groups" (SIGs), and eventually we'll show you where you can even play high-level strategy games on-line against complete strangers.

But first, we'd like to get you in the right frame of mind for this

leg of our journey with a few stories from Micropolis. They're designed to show you the potential of this interactive computing for creative fun and serious work.

THE ELECTRONIC STONE AGE

CompuServe was an innovator in the development of "real-time" electronic conferencing. It allows any number of computer users to type messages to each other as if on some enormous party line. And through CompuServe we've seen this feature evolve from a novelty to a sophisticated, imaginative medium that is the heart of commercial networking.

In the early days—that is, the late 1970s—when the people of the fledgling consumer wing of CompuServe added conferencing to its services, they really didn't know what they had. As one veteran CompuServe employee told us, "We called it 'CB' [the whimsical name has stuck] and we thought it would be an interesting diversion."

Most of the subscribers in those days were computer professionals or serious hobbyists interested in CompuServe's on-line programming tools. It wasn't at all unusual, he said, to be logged in to the new conference area for an hour or more, waiting for someone else to come along to talk.

After a long wait, finally a message like this might appear:

(FRED:) WHAT KIND EQUIP U USE?

Those clipped messages, mostly technical in nature, are the network's equivalent of "What hath God wrought?"

Many things, indeed.

Each new wave of electronic immigrants into CompuServe has contributed a little of its own imagination to conferencing until it has rapidly evolved from a computer toy to a powerful tool that can be used for play and work.

What kind of play?

Well, consider the time that Charlie became the first on-line robbery victim. . . .

SHOOT-OUT ON CHANNEL 10

It was three in the morning and Charlie had just discovered CompuServe's CB Simulation. He had chatted with a fellow who called himself PECOS BILL from Washington State who had given

other insomniacs a firsthand account of Mount St. Helens's latest tremors.

PECOS said something about how the latest eruption had knocked out telephone service for a few days, interrupting his time on CompuServe, but "at least it saved me some money in CIS bills."

"Know what you mean," typed someone named Sweetcakes. "Boys, I don't know *what* I'm going to do about these bills. I'm hooked and it's getting expensive!"

A Texan whose CB "handle" was Gunner: "Guess we're going to have to rob a bank."

"Hey, you want to?" said COWPOKE, another Texan. "I got the horses."

That idea appealed to Sweetcakes and for the next few minutes, everyone who logged on to that particular channel of CB was issued a hat—a black one or a white one. (Sweetcakes was in charge of assigning the colors.)

Newcomers didn't know what was going on; it took a minute to realize they were being conscripted into a gang of Old West outlaws.

"Can I have feathers in my hat?" asked Bright Eyes.

"Girls!" groaned PECOS BILL.

When Sweetcakes decided the gang was big enough, she asked her lieutenants, "Banks or trains, boys?"

Charlie had been "lurking" up until then. (That's network jargon for being a CB wallflower—listening but not participating. A case can be made that in this medium, you don't exist if you don't speak up.) To announce his presence, Charlie offered, "Why not rob the data banks?"

"Naw," said Gunner. "We've got plenty of data. We need cash."

Sweetcakes directed Gunner to take part of the band up the west side of the river, while she and PECOS took the east.

As they rode off, looking for an imaginary (but unsuspecting) bank, Charlie said, "Folks, if I don't have a hat, does that mean I'm a victim?"

Gunner: "Put your hands in the air and don't say a word."

Charlie: "Is a buck and a quarter going to save my life?"

Gunner: "Hand it over."

PECOS BILL: "Hey, I like that watch!"

Sweetcakes: "I want his wallet—I'm into leather!"

Things got a little confusing then. With the gang of desperadoes smelling fresh loot, everyone typed at once, and the story line the group was composing together got a little convoluted.

When things settled down again, Sweetcakes's gang was encamped and Gunner had his harmonica out. (To supply the soundtrack on the silent computer screen, Gunner typed in "Long lonesome sound mingles with the prairie winds . . .")

"Pardon me," Charlie then piped up, "but could someone tell me if I was killed."

"Nope," said Sweeteakes. "You're a repeat customer. We figured we'd rob you again next week."

"Who's tending the horses?" asked PECOS BILL.

"Bright Eyes is," said Sweeteakes.

"No. Sorry about that," said Gunner, "but I'm tending Bright Eyes. Hehehehe."

But the peace of the on-line "camp" was not to continue for long. About that time, a stranger rode onto the channel, calling himself INJUN. His only message was:

"(Arrow). Ssssssssst!"

Sweeteakes narrated the action, informing all (and him) that PECOS BILL had been wounded, and she ordered the gang to head for the horses.

Then Charlie got his revenge. "Sorry, turkeys," he said, "but I was the one tending the horses. Bye-bye," and he rode off, leaving the Injuns to do what Injuns do.

THE STUFF OF ON-LINE FRIENDSHIPS

That little bit of on-line horseplay was the beginning of a long friendship between Charlie and the other members of the gang.

They eventually issued him a hat for being a good sport, and let him ride with them. They even formed an imaginary ranch (called the "Seedy Weed Funny Farm") in a private area of the CB channels where they could meet and chat regularly when they were feeling playful.

And it grew beyond play. Like any friendship, the regulars shared each other's triumphs and defeats, celebrated birthdays and holidays together on-line.

And off-line. Today, three years later, Charlie still regularly communicates by phone and letter with some of the original gang members. They exchange Christmas presents and even have visited each other on vacation, though, as it turns out, they live thousands of miles apart.

But that's not unusual. Many on-line friendships are later supplemented by other kinds of communications.

For example, CB aficionados often host CB parties in major cities across the country. Friends fly in from all directions to meet, face-to-face, people they may have been talking with for months or years on the screen.

In fact, this has become so common that CompuServe has given some of its space to regular on-line reports of CB parties, part of a feature called "Cupcake's CB Society." Located at page CUP-1, the feature, by a New York CBer, also includes profiles of new CB fans, interviews with regulars, and general "social news" of this community.

And there is a sense of community here. Email is the postal service. There are marketplaces (you'll see them later—the National Bulletin Board, Softex, Shop-at-Home). There are on-line neighborhoods (the special-interest groups) that have their own characters which are quite different from the whole of the service.

Think of CB as the town square. It's a common ground, a meeting place where users come to chat, compare notes, ask for help and directions, and more often than not, just play. After all is said and done, CB is meant to be there for the fun of it. You can communicate anonymously if you like, since you can use a handle rather than your real name. You can let your imagination run wild.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!!

Newcomers to CB are often surprised to find out how much can be communicated with what is really a rather limited medium. After all, you're dealing with mere words which appear at the bottom of the screen then scroll to the top and disappear as more words come to take their places. There is no sound, no body language, no meaningful exchange of glances. But for diehard CB fans, the limitations add to the excitement, requiring them to figure out new ways to get across subtle ideas.

For instance, most CBers try to communicate sounds and actions as well as comments (as Gunner transmitted the "sound" of his harmonica). It's common on CB for users to transmit laughs ("hahahahahaha" or "hehehehehe" or occasionally, "Har har har" or "tee hee"). If someone makes a bad pun, the common comment is "*GROAN!*"'

Some regulars enjoy playing with the medium itself. For a long time, a very popular CB citizen was a fellow in Boston who called himself ****(<<>>)****. He enjoyed having a handle that was instantly recognizable but that no one could pronounce.

HARD TIMES FOR REALITY

As you might imagine, in a world of handles and "playlike" games, reality sometimes comes across as fiction.

There's a CB legend of a famous science-fiction writer who once logged in on CompuServe's CB Simulation, using his real name instead of a handle. He allegedly spent fifteen minutes trying to convince skeptics that he was indeed who he said he was—but finally left in disgust, unable to convince anyone.

CB's other famous visitors haven't always been so unlucky.

A famed programmer, Scott Adams, logged on to CB in late 1983. Adams writes popular microcomputer adventure games that are played by directing the action through the use of two-word commands such as GO EAST, EXAMINE CAVE, GET TREASURE, OPEN DOOR, WAVE SCEPTER. Each of his games are played in a mystical setting such as a pyramid, an exotic island, a haunted castle, etc. These adventure games (many of them available on-line with CompuServe, as we'll see in chapter 15) have made his company, Adventure International, one of the most famous computer-game companies in the world.

Who knows why Adams chose to enter CB with his real name, but as soon as he did, it didn't take long for people to find him. After a few sessions, the regulars on CB spread the word that it was, in truth, the *real* Scott Adams, who was using CB as a diversion.

Many who met him could only type their excitement. "WOW!" and "I can't believe it!" was typed time and again.

Adams took it all in stride. "Calm down," he'd usually say.

Dave (whose CB persona is Hermit Dave) watched with amusement as Adams's fans gathered around him. Finally, PATTI wandered onto the channel with a familiar "Hi Folks!"

After a few minutes, it was clear PATTI had not heard of Adams. While others offered phrases of adoration, PATTI seemed perplexed.

HERMIT DAVE: "Scott, watch this! Hey, Patti! Does the name Scott Adams sound familiar?"

PATTI: "Scott Adams? Never heard of him until just now!"

SCOTT ADAMS: "Thanks, Hermit. I needed that."

It wasn't long until the on-line Scott Adams fan club had given PATTI a short course in the history of the game creator.

PATTI became serious about Adams's adventure games, went to the games area of CompuServe, and played his first adventure. A few nights later, she and others gathered on channel 23 for another meeting of the Scott Adams fan club.

PATTI: "Hi Scott! Going crazy over your first game."

SCOTT ADAMS: "Good crazy or bad crazy?"

PATTI: "Desperate crazy. Stuck!!!! The bear in Adventureland is driving me bonkers!"

SCOTT ADAMS: "Did you use the honey?"

PATTI: "If I use it, then how do I get my honey back?"

HERMIT DAVE: "Write your honey a note and tell him all is forgiven. Hehhehc."

PATTI: "***GROAN***"

SCOTT ADAMS: "Don't use honey, get mad at the bear instead."

PATTI: "And do what to him? Hit him? Kill him?"

SCOTT ADAMS: "No, Patti, what do you do when you get mad at someone?"

COMPUNUT: "Yell at him!"

This is typical of a conversation on open CB. All the time PATTI was communicating with Adams, others were carrying on conversations with Adams and with each other—a form of verbal confusion that some say is hard to follow and that left one newcomer with the handle MOUNTAINEER wailing, "Is this the way it goes all night?"

Yes, that's the way it goes all night. And well into the wee hours of the morning. People come and go and many return again and again. Some prowl the channels for old friends. Others prowl the channels for new friends and new relationships. Some are looking for adventure. Some are looking for someone to pass the time of day.

BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS ...

A medium as powerful as this obviously has more applications than merely electronic horse operas and on-line fan clubs. Dave knows that. After developing a friendship with Scott Adams on the public CB channels, Dave persuaded Adams to join him in a private area of the system for a serious on-line interview for an article Dave and his son were writing. Adams, at home at a computer keyboard, said he found the interview more comfortable than many more conventional meetings with journalists.

Meanwhile, "across town" there is a segment of the CompuServe community that seldom goes near CB and yet uses electronic conferencing every day. They are members of CompuServe's special-interest groups, gathered for the discussion of specific topics. The SIGs' use of conference facilities often is markedly different from the general CBers'.

For instance, a SIG might have a guest conference with a newsmaker.

In 1983 members of MAUG (the MicroNet Apple Users' Group) in CompuServe had an on-line interview with Apple founder Stephen Wozniak. The conference ended up being newsworthy—excerpts from it were quoted for three straight weeks in the prestigious computer magazine *InfoWorld*.

Other SIGs have had guest conferences with established programmers (the Atari Forum hosted a gathering with Chris Crawford) and writers and editors (the Authors SIG interviewed writer William Barden, Jr., and editors Eric Maloney and Jake Commander of *80 Micro* magazine).

Still other SIGs seek to explore the conference medium. The Game SIG has held on-line real-time adventure games, a kind of electronic Dungeons and Dragons, and the Literary SIG has tried writing an experimental group novel, with conferencing used for planning sessions.

Usually, in formal SIG conferences, the members will adopt a protocol for questions and answers, having found that guests are overwhelmed if everyone "talks" at once. This simply means asking to be recognized by the discussion leader before asking a question.

And don't think of SIGs as just stuffy, humorless places. Last year, in a usually rather staid corner of the network, we engaged in an evening of puns with a group of respected writers and editors. Out of kindness (fears of charges of defamation), we will refrain from identifying them. Suffice it to say that for two hours we bandied about puns on the word "Spam." (Our personal favorites were "Lady of Spam I adore you" and "I think, therefore I Spam.")

But we're getting a little ahead of ourselves. We will be talking at length about SIGs in later chapters. (If you want to take a peek at things to come, look in the back of the book at the on-line survival kit. There we have a list of some of the popular CompuServe SIGs. But, as interesting as they may look to you, please wait for the rest of us before you go exploring them.)

For now, we hope we've convinced you of the need to learn about conferencing, whether you plan to play or work on the system. If you don't give the conference facilities a try—or worse, if you let the medium intimidate you—you'll be missing out on a lion's share of what CompuServc has to offer.

THE BUSINESS CONFERENCES

Some people are exploring conferencing in still other ways—as a medium for business.

For instance, Dave and Charlie both have used CompuServe's conference facilities for business meetings and, in one case, even for contract negotiations on a book project when all the parties couldn't be in the same town at the same time.

There have been on-line auctions using conference facilities and

often people in computer-related businesses use the medium to stay in touch with their customers. Andrew Fluegelman's story is a good example.

Fluegelman, a writer and programmer in San Francisco, created the idea of "freeware" for distribution of his program, PC Talk, for the IBM PC. This terminal program he distributes free to customers, who pay him \$25 for it—if they like it. They pay nothing if they don't.

In a 1982 interview (on-line, of course), Fluegelman told Charlie that communications networks like CompuServe were essential to his optimistic experiment in software distribution. He uses the system, including confereneing, to confer with eustomers and take orders.

In other uses, programmers sometimes send advance copies of their commercial software to friends around the system for "beta testing," then hold a private conference with all of them to compare notes on possible problems with the product.

COMPUSEX AND OTHER SPECIAL PLACES

Before we take our first field trip into CB, we need to tell you about several other uses it is being put to these days. A newcomer is way ahead of the game if he or she is armed with a little knowledge beforehand. Since CB is so impersonal in some ways and very personal in others, it leads to some interesting new forms of communications which may not be for everyone.

You'll not find the word *compusex* in any dictionary. Not yet, anyway. But you ought to be aware that there is an unknown quantity of this mysterious "art form" going on in CB.

How does one describe compusex? Some call it a sexual fantasy role-playing game. One described it as "sort of like a dirty book that talks baek to you." Here's how it happens, in most cases.

User A (with a maseuline handle) meets User B (with a feminine handle) on-line. The two agree to form a private communication linkup called "TALK." Once in that mode, their two-way conversation cannot be seen by anyone else and they can't see the messages sent by others on CB. In fact, CompuScrvce offieials say that TALK is completely private and not even CompuServe employees can monitor private conversations.

It is in this TALK mode where fantasy sex can be played out to various stages. And since CompuServc has decided that whatever goes on between two consenting adults in TALK is okay, nearly anything can happen.

Don't ever assume that just because two people are in TALK, they are engaged in compusex, replete with dirty talk and reams of copy from the latest sex manual. Many people simply enjoy talking one-on-one without all the hassle of seeing other conversations at the same time and free from the eyes of others.

On the other hand, you'd be wise to be cautious about going into a private, two-way conversation with anyone you don't know. Perhaps you're the kind who likes to throw caution to the wind. That's okay. Just remember that the nice, sweet, polite unknown fellow on the public channels of CB can occasionally become a raging sex maniac in TALK. It has happened more than once. So, if you're going to do it, make sure the kids are out of the room first!

Fortunately, you have a quick and easy way out of TALK if you are uncomfortable with what is going on. A single command (CONTROL P) will whisk you out of TALK and back to the public channel from whence you came. Remember that and you shouldn't have to face anything that makes you angry or scared.

Of course, there are other ways of bringing a halt to unwanted compu-pandering. Our friend, Lindsy Van Gelder, a New York writer, tells a story about a hapless gentleman whose TALK session turned into heavy compu-petting and he typed, "I LOVE YOU DARLING. <LONG FRENCH KISS>."

"Phtoooey!" came the reply from his unwilling partner, who entered a CONTROL P to break connection with the man, leaving him, no doubt, with his tongue hanging out. It turned out that his intended were really Lindsy's two prepubescent daughters who were really having none of it.

More than one CB user has compared the CB channels to a series of singles bars where people hang out waiting for everything from companionship to hardcore sex talk. That's probably overstating it a bit. But be aware that there is a bit of the singles bar in CB. Each night is different, however. And, as Peter Sellers said in *A Shot in the Dark*:

"It's all a part of life's rich pageant!"

CHANNEL 33

CompuServe has attempted to designate channels for various activities and age groups. Channel 1 is supposed to be the adult channel, for example. Channel 17 is supposed to be for youngsters. Channel 19 is supposed to be for those waiting to meet up with friends. This CompuServe system hasn't worked too well because "channel hopping" is fun for people of all ages and all personalities.

There's only one channel that's really special. And it wasn't designed to be that way by CompuServe. It was designed as a special channel by its users themselves.

Channel 33 is the gay channel. Its users are made up almost entirely of gay men from all over the United States and Canada. It has been the gay channel since 1980. One of the people found regularly on the channel said he has counted more than five hundred gay men who have used the channel for conversation.

"We call ourselves 'the family,'" he said.

If you are heterosexual and happen to wander to channel 33, you probably will be told quite early that the channel has been dedicated to a special use by its residents, a sort of electronic "home rule," if you will. Those on the channel won't hold it against you for stumbling into what they consider their little corner of CompuServe.

What they do mind is people who harass them, preach to them, or otherwise make their time on CB miserable. They simply won't tolerate it, and like all other CB users, they have a way of "turning off" channel transmissions from anyone who is harassing them.

Remember this: No one can force you to channel 33 and no one can stop you from going there, just as no one can force you into TALK or keep you there if you want to leave. These decisions are all yours. It's perhaps the purest form of democracy you've got going for you.

That should give you the courage you need to enter the fascinating world of CB.

CHAPTER 5

The Electronic Party

We hope that chapter 4 whetted your appetite for a little electronic conversation. Tonight we'd like to drop in on the never-ending party that is CompuServe's CB Simulation.

As we suggested in the last chapter, CB is where thousands of home computer owners congregate every night (and all day on Saturdays and Sundays) to chat from coast to coast about a wide range of topics.

Before we finish with this book, we'll also show you some serious ways to talk electronically, but for now, let's party.

However, first . . .

PICKING UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF

In chapter 3 you wrapped up your first tour of CompuServe by mailing yourself an electronic letter, called Email. On this tour let's check in and see how to get your mail, read it, and save it in the system.

Then we'll go to the party.

First, log on to the system with your user ID number and password. (If you've forgotten how to do that, refresh your memory by looking over that section in chapter 3. We'll wait.)

Once you're connected, you should see something like this:

CompuServe Information Service
20:17 EST Tuesday 31-Jan-84

Followed by this message:

You have EMAIL waiting.

Then, after a slight pause, you'll probably see this menu:

CompuServe Page EMA-1

Electronic Mail Main Menu

- 1 Read mail
- 2 Compose and send mail

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Hey, wait a minute—what happened to the familiar top menu, CIS-1, that we've grown so attached to?

Most CompuServe subscribers want to pick up their mail before doing anything else. So, when mail is pending, CompuServe accommodates by bringing them directly to the Email menu as soon as they log on, bypassing CIS-1 altogether.

That doesn't mean you HAVE to pick up your mail immediately. You could visit other features and come back to Email later. You could even log off and come back another day, and your mail will wait for you.

Let's take a closer look at that idea. Before we pick up the mail, let's find out where the heck CompuServe has taken us. The best way to get our bearings is to return to the top menu (CIS-1), and then "walk through" the menus back to Email. (That way we'll also appreciate CompuServe's efforts to save us time.)

You'll recall from our last on-line tour that a *T* command will always take us back to the "top" of the system. So, at the bottom of the menu on your screen, enter a *T*.

After a brief pause, the system should display this familiar fellow:

CompuServe Page CIS-1

CompuServe Information Service

- 1 Home Services
- 2 Business & Financial
- 3 Personal Computing
- 4 Services for Professionals

5 The Electronic Mall (tm)

6 User Information

7 Index

Enter your selection number,
or H for more information.

!

In the last tour we took together (chapter 3), we told you that there was a way to zip around the system by using the GO command. It will take you directly to a "page number." But take it from us—you can't really appreciate the convenience of this command until you've navigated the system the way we'd like to this time: the hard way. We're not really being sadists. It's just that the best way to get a feeling for how CompuServe is organized is to walk through a little of it menu by menu.

Oh, by the way, remember what we said in the introduction to this book: CompuServe is constantly changing. It's the nature of videotex. So, some of the menus you see here might be slightly altered, but the commands we're using should still apply. The key is this: Read the instructions on the screen and let this book be your guide to them.

Okay, here we go. From the main menu, select number 1, Home Services, and the system will display the Home menu:

CompuServe Page HOM-1

HOME SERVICES

- 1 News/Weather/Sports
- 2 Reference Library
- 3 Communications
- 4 Home Shopping/Banking
- 5 Discussion Forums
- 6 Games
- 7 Education
- 8 Home Management
- 9 Travel
- 10 Entertainment

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

What we want here is Communications, so now choose option number 3. Here's the next list of services the system will display:

CompuServe Page HOM-30

COMMUNICATIONS

- 1 Electronic Mail
(user to user messages)
- 2 CB Simulation
- 3 National Bulletin Board
(public messages)
- 4 User Directory
- 5 Ask Aunt Nettie
- 6 CB Society

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Ah, we're closer. Option 1 is electronic mail. Choose it and CompuServe will send you a message something like this:

CompuServe Page HOM-26

Welcome to EMAIL, the user-to-user message system from CompuServe. EMAIL allows you to communicate with other users of the information service. Instructions and options are included on each page. You are prompted for all required information. If you are not sure of what to do, key H (for Help) and receive further instructions.

Key S or <ENTER> to continue

"Help"? Who needs help? You've got us, right? So tap ENTER and the system should respond with:

CompuServe Page EMA-1

Electronic Mail Main Menu

- 1 Read mail
- 2 Compose and send mail

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

We've come full circle. You now see that when CompuServe found out you had Email waiting, it saved you some time by taking you directly to this page, EMA-1. You can also see that you could have returned directly to this page by entering G EMA-1 (for "Go to page EMA-1").

Okay, select the first option ("Read mail"). The next menu should appear:

CompuServe Page EMA-3

1 Charlie Bowen/WELCOME!

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Now you're ready to read, but before you do, notice what page number you're on. In the upper right-hand corner is page EMA-3. As you know from what you've learned about the GO command, we could have sidestepped some of those menus if we had entered G EMA-3 instead of an option number. (Incidentally, the hyphen is optional. You could enter G EMA 4 or G EMA4.)

To read your mail, type 1 at this menu and the letter you wrote to yourself in chapter 3 will display on the screen, followed by "Key <ENTER> to continue."

CompuServe Page EMA-5

25-Jan-84 18:04 Fr [71635,1025]

Hi! Welcome to the CompuServe
Information Service. You've made
amazing progress so far. But
there's much more to learn.

Key <ENTER> to continue

!

Okay, troops. Let's wait here for everyone to catch up. Some of us may want to savor our words. . . .

Now, everybody hit ENTER and the system should give you a new list of options:

CompuServe

Page EMA-5

- 1 File this message, then delete from mailbox
- 2 Delete from mailbox
- 3 Display the message again

Enter your selection number,
or H for more information.

!

Most of the time, you'll probably just delete the Email once you've read it (selecting option 2). However, for this tour, let's save it. As a CompuServe subscriber, you have a certain amount of free storage space available to you. In later chapters we'll be talking more about this storage space and how you can use it.

But for now, let's just save the letter in storage on the promise that we'll tell you how to retrieve it on down the road.

Choose option 1 from the menu. Now the system will ask you for a file name.

CompuServe

Page EMA-9

Name the output file, ? for help or
<ENTER> to delete message.

:

CompuServe wants to know what you'd like to call this particular file when it's placed in your storage area. It can be a word up to six letters. Let's call it "MYMAIL." Enter that, without the quotation marks. CompuServe will now report:

Message filed in DSK:MYMAIL
and deleted from your mailbox.

Key <ENTER> to continue

!

That's all there is to it. The system should inform you that the mail has been saved.

ON TO THE PARTY!

Enough of this sitting around reading letters from yourself. We promised you a party, so let's get on with it. First, take the express GO command by typing G CB (for "Go CB Simulation") at the bottom of your last menu on the screen. CompuServe will take you right to the front door. If we didn't have the GO command, we'd have to travel by way of that Communications menu you saw a few pages back. Too time-consuming that way, and besides, we've already seen that neighborhood.

After you enter G CB, you should see a list of options something like this:

CB Information	Page CB-10
Citizens Band Simulator	
1 Instructions	
2 CB Etiquette	
3 CB Band A (Mainframe A)	
4 CB Band B (Mainframe B)	
5 CBIG Special Interest Group	
6 CB Society: Cupcake's Column	
7 Computing Across America	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

Hmmmm. Some interesting possibilities here and the temptation is to stop and look around. Let's take a rain check. We want to leave some things for you to explore on your own. For now, take option 3. Now the system gives us:

CB Information	Page CB-1
Request Recorded, One Moment, Please	

(While somewhere in Columbus, Ohio, we're being moved to the host computer that contains the CB Simulation, and, finally . . .)

Thank You for Waiting

CB Simulator Ver 3(60) Band A
What's your handle?

Here the system is taking care of a little bookkeeping. CompuServe is asking for your handle because once in conference, every message you send will be preceded automatically by your name, as it might appear in a transcript. Therefore, be sure to enter your handle the way you'd like it to appear to people you'll be talking with.

Some people spend many hours dreaming up just the right handle. Charlie uses the handle "Bluegrass" because he lives near the Kentucky border and likes to play guitar in old-time music bands. Dave picked "Hermit Dave" because he's always loved the arts—particularly classically ribald limericks. Just pick a handle that says something about you, but *don't* use any handle that hints at your password. As we warned you earlier, your password is the key to your account number. Guard it!

After you've picked your handle and entered it, the system will give you a quick accounting of how many people are on the 36 "channels" of CB. The message will look like this:

(1)15,(3)5,(6)2,(30)10

This means there are fifteen talkers on channel 1, five on channel 3, two on 6, and ten on channel 30. The computer will ask which channel you wish to visit (that is, on which channel you wish to send and receive messages). Look at the report on the screen and pick a channel where there are four or five people, such as channel 3 in our example, and enter that number. (Obviously, the report—called a "status"—is different on your screen than it is on the page here, since we're all visiting CB at different times. However, the commands will be the same for all of us.)

From this point, you can "talk" by typing your messages on the screen, ending each message with the ENTER key. A message can't be longer than eighty characters. If it is, the system will tell you it's too long and insist that you enter a shorter line.

Also, no one can see what you're typing *as you type it*. Only after you tap the ENTER key will your message be transmitted to the others.

The computer will handle the introductions. Type:

Hello, all. <press ENTER>

To everyone else on the channel, it will appear:

(3, Bluegrass) Hello, all.

(With your own handle in place of "Bluegrass," of course.) In other words, you won't see your own messages scrolling across the screen with your handle in front of them, but everyone else tuned to that channel will. Incidentally, the "3" refers to channel 3, where you are tuned in. There are two bands of the CB Simulation—bands A and B. They are identical in operation, but people using one band can't talk to those on the other. This means that if you want to meet a friend on CB, be sure to specify which band you'll be using.

You may have received greetings from others on the channel by now. We don't want to interrupt, so we'll try to keep the rest of this brief. Keep your eyes on the screen and be ready to answer questions that others may ask. It's quite common for regulars on CB to ask newcomers where they are from, what they do for a living, whether they're male or female ("You M or F?"), etc.

Listen to some of the chatting and when there's a lull in the conversation, you can read on.

CONFERENCING COMMANDS

Oh, hi, again. Having a good time?

While there's a pause in the action, here's a rundown on some other features of CB and other conferencing.

If you've tried to do any conversing, you've probably noticed that the messages you're typing sometimes get interrupted by incoming messages and you find you've forgotten what you've typed so far. CompuServe has provided a handy CONTROL code for these times. If you enter a CONTROL V, it will cause the system to redisplay what you've typed before you actually send it with the ENTER key. Of course, it only works on your current message, not those that you've already pressed ENTER on.

Another good CONTROL code—CONTROL U will erase everything you have just typed, if you haven't tapped ENTER yet. But, if you press the ENTER key before CONTROL U, then everything you've typed is transmitted.

Aside from those CONTROL codes, most of the commands in conference mode are preceded by a slash (/) and must be typed flush left on the screen (that is, in the first position of a new line on the screen).

/STA is the command for a status report and it will display the number of users on each channel, just like the report you saw when

you first came to the conference area. Try it. On a new line, type /STA. The system will show you something like this:

(1)5,(3)5#, (6)3,(30)10

The # sign indicates the channel to which you are tuned.

/TUN lets you move to another channel. For example, if you wanted to leave channel 3 and go to channel 1, you would enter /TUN 1 flush left on the screen. Now a /STA command would show you (1)6#, (3)4,(6)2,(30)10—that is, one more person on channel 1 (you) and one less on channel 3 (you again), and the # sign would be moved from 3 to 1.

Sometimes the best part of a busy party is that you can stand in the middle of the room and listen in on several conversations at the same time. You can do that here, too. With the /MON command you can “monitor” up to two other channels without actually tuning to them. That is, you may send messages on only one channel, but you can see the messages being sent on up to three—the channel you’re tuned to and the two you’re monitoring.

Try this: Suppose you were tuned to channel 1 and you still wanted to see what was being said on channel 3. You could enter the command:

/MON 3

Now when you enter a /STA command, the channels you’re monitoring are noted with an asterisk (*). So, at this point, the status report would appear like this:

(1)6#, (3)4*, (6)2,(30)10

If you decided to monitor channel 6 or channel 30, too, an * would appear beside the new channel as well.

Try that. Monitor a channel and listen to the conversation for a minute or so. You should be seeing comments coming in from both the channels you’re tuned to and the one you’re monitoring. Preceding each comment is the number of the channel on which it is being typed. Also, enter a /STA command and look at where the # and the * are placed.

Remember, whatever you type in CB is transmitted only to the channel to which you’re tuned, not to the ones you’re monitoring.

If you want to stop monitoring a channel, the command is /UNM, such as:

/UNM 3

You can get a list of the handles of all the people on CB by requesting a "user status" (or USTAT) report. The command is /UST. You also can use the /UST command followed by a channel number to get a user status report of a specific channel.

On a new line (flush left), type /UST followed by a channel number, like:

/UST 6

The computer will respond with a list something like this:

Job	User ID	Nod	Ch	Tlk	Handle
19	71635,1025	NYN	6		FALCON
114	70000,111	CWV	6	*	Lady Editor
203	77777,375	QAK	6		Bluegrass
214	70000,1331	ALT	6	*	Hermit Dave

In this user-status list, the number on the left is a "job number." (The "job" is a one-, two-, or three-digit number the computer assigns to each user when he or she logs in to the conference mode. You will need to use it in some special features of conference that we'll see in the next chapter.)

Following the job number is the user ID number, the node (the code for the city through which he or she is connected to CompuServe), the channel to which the user is tuned, and the handle of each user.

Incidentally, the node information (the "NYN," "CWV," "QAK" business) is a code for the cities from which the users are calling. (And if you're thinking of a wonderful pun—"I've got a code in my node"—forget it. It's been done.) In the back of the book is a list of some of the nodes. You might find it interesting to see where some of the other people are calling from. As you'll see, the letters used in a code sometimes are unrelated to the city name.

Also, on your screen you may see some asterisks in front of some of the names on the /USTAT, like the ones in front of Lady Editor and Hermit Dave in our example. This means that those users are in private "talks." As you'll see later, there are other ways to get user information and several other ways to "talk" on CB, including a variety of methods for private chats. However, let's save those for the next chapter when you're off-line again. No use spending your connect-time dollars reading a book.

Enjoy yourself!

We'll leave you with two commands—/OFF and /EXI. Entered on a line by itself, /OFF will disconnect you from the system. /EXI will allow you to leave CB, but remain connected to the system.

SUMMARY

Quickly, here's a list of the CB commands we've looked at in this chapter:

/STA—Status gives you a list of the number of users on each channel.

/TUN—Tunes to a new channel. For example, /TUN 6 would move you to channel 6.

/MON—Monitors a channel other than the one you're on. You can monitor up to two channels at a time. (/MON 1,2 would monitor channels 1 and 2.)

/UNM—Unmonitors a channel.

/UST—Displays a list of all users by job number, name, node, and user ID number.

/OFF—Exits conference mode and logs you off the service.

/EXI—Exits conference mode and returns to the regular services.

CONTROL V—Redisplays what you have typed before you actually send it.

CONTROL U—Erases everything you have just typed if you haven't tapped ENTER yet. Of course, once you press the ENTER key, everything you've typed is transmitted.

CHAPTER 6

After the Ball: More about CB

You can put up your dancing shoes now. We won't be going on-line in this chapter. Instead, we'll sit back and reflect a little on what we've learned so far about electronic conferences. We'll also learn how to tailor this powerful service to our needs.

For instance, we'll find out how to have private talks with one or more friends at the same time and how to set a private area where only those who know the code word will be able to take part in the conversation. Also, we'll have some hints on how to be a good citizen of this new medium—and what to do about those who aren't particularly good citizens. Finally, we'll have some tips from the sadder-but-wiser department about how to avoid the wolves and vipers in this neck of the woods, how to sidestep that minority that always seems to want to abuse a good thing.

In the last chapter, during our on-line tour, you only saw half of the seventy-two channels available to CompuServe CB users, the half on Band A. At the CB-10 page, you have the option of going to Band A or Band B. But what if you're on one of the bands and you want to go to the other? Must you go back to the menu? Not at all. The command /BAND B from Band A will get you to the other set of thirty-six channels. Likewise, the command /BAND A from Band B will get you quickly back to Band A.

Even with your brief exposure to conference channels, you've seen the potential for this feature of CompuServe. Of course, you can use a facility like this for a free-wheeling national party. But, more than that, being able to talk with any number of people at the same time, you can use CB for meetings of people of similar interests to set up discussion groups, business meetings, seminars. We'll see in a

later chapter, when we discuss CompuServe's many "special-interest groups" (called "SIGs" or, more recently, "forums") that some of your fellow subscribers are doing just that.

The service would be even more useful if you could alter it to meet your own needs. As it happens, you can, to a certain extent.

One of the most popular features of CB is TALK, which allows you to communicate privately with one other person.

Here's how it works:

Suppose you were on one of the public channels of CB and, after entering the /USTAT command, you saw that your old friend, Boston Slim, was on the system. As you'll recall from the last chapter, the /USTAT also lists each participant's job number, and it's with the TALK program that you'll use those job numbers.

From the list, you've seen that your friend's job number is 166. To invite him into a private conversation, you only need to type:

```
/TALK 166
```

(Meaning, "Send a talk request to job number 166.")

After pressing ENTER, this message would appear on your screen:

```
Job 166 has been notified, please  
wait (to stop waiting, key a ^P)
```

After this, you would no longer "hear" the conversations on the public channel to which you were tuned. That's because with the /TALK command, you've gone into a kind of limbo, waiting for him to reply. Notice that the second line of that message says that you can enter a CONTROL P to stop waiting and return to the public channels.

It's up to Boston Slim whether to accept or decline the invitation for a private conversation. What happened on his screen (while you're in limbo) is a message like this:

```
**Please /TALK to Job 3270000,010  
Old Fella
```

Your handle, job number, and PPN (user ID) are all displayed. That message will only appear on his screen. Others on the channel do not know he's received a TALK request.

If he decides to talk to you, he will enter:

```
/TALK 32
```

This means, "Talk to job number 32"; then both of you will receive messages something like this:

```
Job 166 [70000,000] Boston Slim is  
now in contact (Use ^P to break  
contact)
```

```
>
```

Notice that CONTROL P is still the way to break off the TALK and return to the public channels. Also, notice the > below the message. That's the prompt for the TALK mode. CompuServe assumes you know to whom you're "talking," so it doesn't supply handles in the TALK mode. All your messages will follow the > prompt.

And, as long as you both want to continue the TALK, your messages will be seen only by the two of you. Those commands that work on the public channels—such as /STA, /USTAT, /MON, etc.—are not in effect in TALK.

TALK, because it allows some privacy in your real-time conversations, is very popular with CB regulars who have developed friendships on the system. Many subscribers use Email to set dates for TALK sessions later.

Now, a word about manners. Had you been on-line and followed our instructions to the letter, you might have offended some of the CB regulars. In CB circles it's considered good manners to use the public channel to invite someone to TALK before entering the /TALK command. Many regulars simply ignore TALK requests from people they don't know and those that were not previously announced.

The etiquette of this new medium would have you seek out Boston Slim on the public channel and ask him there if he'd like to talk. If yes, then you would enter a /TALK 166 command.

Also, it's a good idea to know your own job number. As we've seen, you can find job numbers on the USTAT list, but on a busy night around the system, that can be quite time-consuming. It's polite to save a TALK partner that hassle simply by saying, "Call job 23," or whatever your job number is. And there's a way that's faster than /USTAT to find your own job number. On a public channel, just enter:

```
/JOB
```

And the system will report a number. That's your job number.

Something else about TALK. As we mentioned in the last chapter, when you issue a /USTAT command on an open channel, you'll probably notice on the list that some of the users have asterisks (*)

beside their names. This simply means they are "in talk" with someone. If you try to TALK to someone who is already in talk, say job 40, you'll get the message

Job 40 is already /TALKing, try
later

WHEN THREE ISN'T A CROWD

So, the advantage to TALK is that it's private and one to one. You don't have to "shout" to get your messages across through all the other conversations on the channel. The disadvantage is that in TALK you're out of touch with the rest of the network. If you wanted to chat with someone while waiting for another friend to show up, you couldn't use TALK, because you couldn't then see who else is around. And if you wanted to have a three-way conversation, you couldn't use this mode either.

But CompuServe has provided a way for privacy without giving up these capabilities. The next time you're on-line, try using some of the Scramble options.

Here's how they work. Suppose you've agreed to meet four friends on channel 16 and you want to have a private chat with them. In advance, you could decide on a code word, say, "Violet."

First of all, you would all tune to channel 16 and then each enter:

/SCR VIOLET

That means, "Scramble on the word VIOLET." In a second, the system would respond with this message:

** SCRAMBLE is ON **

From this point, your transmissions would be scrambled—that is, only readable by others who enter the same code.

Incidentally, all the participants in a scrambled conversation do not have to enter the code at the same time. If one of your friends is late, he or she need only tune to the proper channel and enter the /SCR VIOLET command to join you.

Note, though, that all the participants on a scrambled conversation have to be tuned to the same channel. It would do no good to know the right code word if all your associates have scrambled on channel 1 and you're on channel 16.

So what happens if you're on the correct channel, but you've serambled on the wrong eode word? Well, the system will put you in scramble all by yourself. You may see that there are other people serambled on that channel, but you won't be able to read their encrypted messages. It will look something like this:

```
(1,Bluegrass) ered3#21xssak 1  
dcess!! 2z- "#edsWEWSsd!  
(1,Sweetcakes) Vd # 2#"!s  
dde#EDg'*  
(1,Gunner) DDFedSAd ! #45.
```

Not particularly enlightening, that. Notice that we can see the handles, but not the messages. Later, at the end of this little disscussion, we'll show you a neat triek for communiating with Bluegrass, Sweetcakes, and Gunner in this situation—a kind of emergency smoke signal. But first, let's look at some other Seramble commands.

To leave scramble and return to the regular CB public ehanneles, you need to "unseramble." The eommand is:

```
/UNS
```

And the system will display:

```
** SCRAMBLE is OFF **
```

Anything you type after this message, will be readable on the publie ehannele.

But where are you "going" when you go to seramble? Is it a separate area of the system, like TALK? Well, no, not really. In scramble, you will still be on the public channels, but in a special encrypted area. It's as if you're invisible to everyone except those with the correect eode word. Some veteran CBers think of seramble as "going upstairs" to the private ehambers. Regulars even have standing eode words for their group of friends. Remember back in chapter 4 when Charlie shared his story about the "Seedy Weed Funny Farm" gang? Well, their "ranch" was ehannele 10 serambled on the code SWFF, the first letters of each word in the name.

Sinee you're on the publie ehanneles, all of the regular features of CB still are available to you when you're serambled. For example, you can enter a /USTAT command and get a list of other users. You'll see your own name on the list, too—the user-status list does not make a distinction between serambled and unserambled users. You also can enter a /STA and see the number of users on each ehannele.

And you can monitor what's happening upstairs and downstairs in a

scrambled conversation. Suppose you've decided to scramble a conversation but all your participants haven't arrived yet. The late arrivals might not know you've scrambled. You'd want to monitor the public channel (as well as the scrambled channel on which you're transmitting).

/SMC code means "scramble and monitor clear." In other words, you can enter this command when you want to see the messages from those users on the open channel who aren't scrambled and at the same time communicate with those who are scrambled.

In our example, entering:

```
/SMC VIOLET
```

will produce the message:

```
** SCRAMBLE is ON **  
** Reving both clear and scr **
```

That's trying to tell you that everything you type will be in scramble, receivable only to those people who have scrambled on the code word "violet." However, you will be *receiving* ("Reving") messages from both the scrambled channel ("upstairs") and the public channel ("downstairs").

The flipside of that command is /XCL code. It means "transmit clear." You can use it when you want to monitor the scrambled conversation while still communicating with those who aren't scrambled.

For example, if you entered:

```
/XCL VIOLET
```

the system will tell you:

```
** Reving both clear and scr **  
» CAUTION: sending clear text <<
```

Notice it's warning you that, while you are now receiving from both upstairs and downstairs, all of your messages are going out to the public channel below.

Now, for that little trick we've learned in scramble. We learned it the hard way—neither one of us can seem to remember scramble codes and invariably we end up in scramble on the wrong code word, so that the conversation looks something like this:

```
Hi folks!!  
(16,Lady Editor) #E23d1!! , #$$#"2sd*  
(16,Lynx) fd#ss! S #3s #sds!
```

As we mentioned, messages like that mean that you've arrived in scramble on the right channel, but you're not using the same scramble code as Lady Editor and Lynx are using. All we're seeing is their handles. Well, it so happens that they are seeing your handle, too, but "Hi folks!!" is being encrypted.

Hmmmmmm. If you could change your handle, you could communicate with them enough to at least get a message across.

And you can change your handle, with the /HAN command. If you type:

/HAN

the system will ask:

What's your handle:

Then you type in the new handle you want to display to the world. Now, if you were to change your handle to HELP!! TALK? and typed a few letters on the screen, what would appear to Lady Editor and Lynx would be:

(1, HELP!! TALK?) "32as1!"*

Since they've already seen your original handle, they would know who you are and one of them could call you into TALK and remind you of the code.

That's a bit of a hassle, avoidable by just remembering the code in the first place, but it does work.

Of course, that /HAN command can be used on the public channels, too. At any point, you can change your handle to something new—even to someone else's handle. However—WARNING: "Handle stealing" is frowned upon by most CB regulars. And that leads us to a new topic.

MANNERS, MORALS, ETIQUETTE, CRANKS, AND CRAZIES

You now know most of the major commands of CompuServe's conference mode. You'll learn several more important ones before this chapter ends—commands that will allow you to block (or "squelch") out messages from other users.

Now, why in the world would you choose not to hear someone else's comments on an open conference channel?

One reason is convenience. When you're tuned to a channel in which twenty to thirty people are trying to talk at one time, you may find it useful to squelch certain users, just to better follow conversation in which you're interested.

Sometimes you might want to squelch a person whose language or comments you find distasteful.

And that certainly is a possibility. CompuServe frowns on the use of vulgar language, and even threatens immediate disconnection of offenders, who then would have to pay \$10 to reconnect. Still, the channels—particularly in the CB Simulation—are public and, just like the CB radio fad of the 1970s, the conversation sometimes gets a little racy. What you decide to do about that is, of course, your business, but you should know how to use the Squelch commands.

The act of squelching a user simply informs the system that you want to see no further messages from a user who identifies himself with a particular handle. It has no effect on the squelched user—he or she won't even know you've stopped listening, unless you decide to announce it publicly.

To use the command, enter /SQU followed by the handle of the user in question. You must enter this command immediately after a message from the person in question. For instance:

```
/SQU HARPO
```

The system will respond by telling you that a particular user ID number has been squelched:

```
>Squelching 70000,010  
>Type/SQU (no handle) to clear
```

As the message notes, to "unsquelch" a user, simply type /SQU with no handle:

```
/SQU
```

And the system says:

```
>SQUELCH is now OFF
```

You can squelch as many other users as you choose, one at a time. The system will keep track of those you are not interested in listening to. A single /SQU command without a handle will lift the Squelch against all of them.

Once you've squelched a user, he will remain squelched, even if

he chooses to change his handle, since the system is dealing with user ID numbers, not handles.

You also can squelch by user ID number with the /SBU command. For instance:

```
/SBU 70000,010
```

Also, using this command, you don't have to be on the same channel with a particular user to squelch. And unlike /SQU, with /SBU you don't have to wait until you see a message from the user.

ELECTRONIC CIVICS LESSON

We've come a long way in this chapter. But before we call it a night, let's talk a minute about the kinds of conversation you might hear on CompuServe's CB Simulation—the good guys, the bad guys, and you.

Being a good citizen in this new medium is more than just avoiding offensive language on public channels. Some of the real stars of CB have been those who have made a name for themselves on the channels by being helpful. When we were learning about CompuServe several years ago, we were fortunate to find a number of good, helpful people who were willing to take greenhorns under their wings and show them around.

These people are still out there—answering questions every night about all kinds of subjects, from navigating the system to computer questions to advice for the lovelorn. As you become experienced at this kind of communication, you can repay that debt by watching out for the newcomers. We're still very much in the pioneer stages of this kind of computer communications and you can make a memory for some frustrated immigrant to these strange shores if you take a few minutes to help someone along.

Those are the good guys. The bad guys fall into three general categories—the obnoxious, the vandals, and the crooks.

Among the bad citizens of conferencing are the Buffer Dumpers. Most good terminal programs these days have a facility for transmitting the contents of a buffer. That's a useful feature for preparing electronic mail off-line and dumping it to Email in a burst. For some reason, Buffer Dumpers think they are the only users with this feature and take satisfaction in capturing a large amount of data—their current term paper, grocery list, even a portion of earlier CB transmissions—and dumping it back to CB. They try to tie up commu-

nieations for everyone else until the buffer is empty. The best recourse is to either /SQUELCH the offender or /TUNE to another channel. CompuServe, by the way, is fighting Buffer Dumpers. New software on CompuServe's end is supposed to detect buffered transmissions in conference after three lines.

Of course, if this offense (or any of the others we'll talk about here) is serious enough, you can always look up his user ID number and report him to CompuServe, through the Feedback option. All messages sent to the systems operators at CompuServe, of course, are kept confidential. CompuServe wants to hear about anyone who is abusing the system.

You can look up the number with a /USTAT command, or a new one—the /WHO. If you enter /WHO immediately following an incoming message, the system will report the sender's handle and user ID number. For example:

```
(A1,Bluegrass) Had a good time!  
/WHO  
Bluegrass = 70007,411
```

If you would rather see everyone's user ID (once called a PPN, which stood for Personal Programming Number), the command /PPN will show you all user IDs for all the handles like this:

```
(A1,Bluegrass) [70007,411] Had a  
good time!
```

To turn this function off, type /NOPPN.

Also among the bad guys are those who like to use the public channels to offend or shock strangers, hiding behind the anonymity of a handle. This is a kind of obscene call with an audience. Newcomers, particularly those with feminine-sounding handles, are often this prankster's victims. He likes to lure them into TALK. Again, if this kind of thing offends you, use your /SQU option, and remember, CONTROL P will get you out of any TALK session immediately.

A more "legitimate" form of this is what some people think of as "compusex." This is a relatively new phenomenon on the system, and some users have developed it into a full-fledged electronic recreation. They cruise the system looking for new partners who want to go into TALK and have a dual fantasy. Now, a good case can—and has—been made that compusex can be a serious, useful psychological release for people who have difficulty talking about sexual matters. You can make up your own mind whether this sort of thing appeals to you.

But remember, serious compusex enthusiasts frown on those who trick other users into a session. If talking about sex with eom-

plete strangers by way of your computer is not your idea of a good time, just politely decline. "Good citizens" will respect your wishes.

Handle Stealers are a step down on the scale, graduating from simple nuisance to vandalism. These people abuse the system by using the /HAN command to masquerade as someone else. As you've seen, the /USTAT command will list each user's ID number in addition to the handles and nodes. The Handle Stealer is counting on your not noticing a discrepancy between the handle and the usual ID number attached to it. Unfortunately, Handle Stealers often get away with their pranks and can damage the victim's relationship with the new friends he's made on the system. If you suspect that someone has been stealing handles, you should report the ID number to CompuServe. If the offender doesn't listen to a warning, CompuServe can elect to remove him from the system by discontinuing his account.

By far, the most serious offender you might run across is the Password Thief. As we've already said several times (and will say several more times) NEVER GIVE YOUR PASSWORD TO ANYONE ON THE SYSTEM. You might be surprised how many people forget that simple rule when confronted by an official-looking message. That's what the Password Thief is counting on—your letting your defenses down.

Password thieves work in several ways. One popular ploy is to lure a newcomer into TALK and after a few minutes, transmit a message something like this:

```
>%NTSWRK Communications problems -  
please wait
```

followed by

```
>PASSWORD
```

Well, you know enough now, we hope, to see through this one. Even though there are no handles present in TALK, you know now that all messages there are preceded by a >. All you'd have to do in this situation is enter CONTROL P. If it's a ruse, then you'll exit TALK and return to the public channels.

Even if there is a possibility of a system problem (and error messages and systems messages are sent from time to time), the best approach is to hang up and redial. Do not enter your password.

In a variation on this theme, the Password Thief sometimes changes his handle to something like "CIS Supervisor" and will tell an unsuspecting newcomer that he is "running a check" and needs for you to "verify" your password. Bunk! CompuServe doesn't do that. Now, there are CompuServe employees who regularly visit most CompuServe services. Most of them have user IDs that start with

70003 or 70006. However, a CompuServe employee will never ask you for your password on-line.

So just make a note of the user ID number of anyone who ever asks you for your password. The good folks at Feedback will want to talk to him.

We mean none of this to scare you away from CB and the other conferencing features on CompuServe. On the contrary, it's our hope that by knowing some of the wolves in these woods and how to deal with them, you'll be more confident in your exploration.

We've had many rewarding, exciting, amusing, satisfying experiences in electronic conference. We urge you to test your new knowledge on-line. You now know more about CB than we did in our first year on the system. In our next chapter we'll have our third on-line tour to new sections of CompuServe, but feel free to have an unchaperoned return visit to CB in the meantime to stretch your wings.

IN THIS CHAPTER ...

Here is a summary of the commands you've seen in this chapter:

/TALK allows you to talk privately with another user. (/TALK 43 would notify the person with job 43 that you wanted to talk.)

/SCR (code) places you in scramble mode and enables you to send and receive messages from any other user who had scrambled on the same code word on that particular channel.

/XCL (code) allows you to monitor a scrambled channel while transmitting and receiving on a public channel.

/SMC (code) allows you to monitor a public channel and transmit and receive on a scrambled channel.

/WHO displays the name and user ID of the last person who transmitted on your channel.

/JOB displays your own job number.

/SQU handle, where handle is the name of the user, squelches a subscriber so that you no longer receive messages from him or her.

/SBU ID number, where ID number is the user ID, has the same effect as /SQU, except that you're squelching by user ID instead of handle.

/PPN displays a CB user's ID number with his or her handle.

/NOPPN turns off the /PPN option so all you get is the handle.

/BAND A will take you directly to CB Band A if you're on CB Band B.

/BAND B will take you directly to CB Band B if you're on CB Band A.

CONTROL P will break off a TALK session.

CHAPTER 7

For Sale, and For Free!

Databases are great repositories of information and programs available to people with microcomputers. CompuServe has many databases—in fact, the entire service could be thought of as an encyclopedia of databases.

Tonight, in our third on-line tour of the system, we'll visit two different types of databases.

First, as soon as you fire up your computer, we'll check in at the National Bulletin Board. This is CompuServe's classified ad section, where users can post free notices to buy or sell all kinds of things. We'll find out how to scan and read the notices and how to leave one for others to read.

Then, before the hour's up, we'll look into a different kind of database where nothing's for sale—everything there is free. In this section, called Public Access, you can find public-domain programs and articles and other information that have been donated by other users.

During this tour, we'll see the system as we've never seen it before—and in a way even some experienced CompuServe users have never seen it—when we take our first steps into the Twilight Zone, the mysterious personal file area. And we'll find out that it's not as scary as some people think.

One of the purposes of this tour will be to show you that there are neighborhoods in CompuServe that do not use the menus of options you've gotten familiar with. Some of the best services in the system have different screen displays and their own sets of commands. You shouldn't let these features scare you off just because they're different.

Before you log on, get a pencil and paper and put it beside your computer. No snide remarks, now, about this being a paperless medium. You need the pencil and paper for one of our exercises.

Also, before getting on the system, let's take a minute and get an idea of where we're going on our first stop. Look back in chapter 5, where we took the last on-line tour of CompuServe. Remember the long road we took to get to the CB Simulation the first time? At the top menu in the system, we selected Home Services. Then at the Home Services menu, we chose Communications, and it was from Communications that we took the turn into CB. Find that Communications menu in chapter 5 (in our example, it had a page number of HOM-30), and you'll notice that one of the other services offered there is the National Bulletin Board. Ah, it's in the same neighborhood as CB.

Okay, now that you have a feeling for the geography, sign on to the system as you usually do.

Ready? The first destination is the National Bulletin Board (sometimes called Bullet), and, of course, we could get there as we went to CB last time, by paging through all those menus. But because we know that the page we want is HOM-23, we can take the cross-town express and save some time.

At the bottom of the first menu, enter G HOM-23, like this:

CompuServe	Page CIS-1
CompuServe Information Service	
1 Home Services	
2 Business & Financial	
3 Personal Computing	
4 Services for Professionals	
5 The Electronic Mall (tm)	
6 User Information	
7 Index	
Enter your selection number, or H for more information.	
!	

The system should respond with something like this:

CompuServe Page HOM-23

National Bulletin Board

CompuServe's National Bulletin Board (BULLET) allows you to post messages that can be read by thousands of subscribers in the United States and Canada.

BULLET uses unique commands. These will be listed for you if you type HELP at the asterisk (*) prompt.

Key S or <ENTER> to continue.

!

Believe us, the service itself isn't nearly as intimidating as the sign at the door. It's just CompuServe's way of warning you that what you'll see on your screen in the bulletin board is different from the menus you've gotten used to. Let's just all stay together and nobody'll get lost.

Tap ENTER.

The system should now display this:

CompuServe Page HOM-24

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please
Thank You for Waiting

And finally, the opening message (a disclaimer from CompuServe, really) of the bulletin board.

Notice: CompuServe reserves the right to review all publicly posted information and to delete any which, in its sole judgment, is inappropriate or offensive. CompuServe will be indemnified against any loss or expense arising out of the publication of advertisements, including those resulting from claims or suits for libel, violation or right of privacy, or publicity, plagiarism or copyright infringement. CompuServe will not be responsible

for any loss or expense arising from customer's use of posted information, without limitation. CompuServe makes no warranties, expressed or implied.

Please enter HELP if you need instructions.

*

At the bottom of the screen is an asterisk (*). This is the prompt for this particular service. All your commands should be typed in next to the asterisk. And, instead of numbers, you'll type out a short word to describe what you want to do.

As the message on the screen says, you can enter the word HELP next to the asterisk for some instructions. Do that, and the system will tell you that there are a dozen commands you can enter at the prompt in the bulletin-board program:

SCAN	READ	INDEX	VIEW
COMPOSE	POST	EDIT	ERASE
CHECK	EXIT	AGE	OFF

Also, the message from CompuServe has another piece of useful information—commands may be abbreviated to the first three letters. For example, you don't have to type COMPOSE. You can just enter COM if you'd like.

And you can request help on a specific command, by typing HELP READ.

There's no use having you spend your time here studying all twelve of these commands. We'll walk through the more important ones.

As we said, this is the classified ad section of CompuServe, where you can have a national audience for three kinds of messages: general NOTICES, items for SALE, and items and services WANTED.

All the commands follow the same style, or "syntax." Like this SCAN command: SCAN kind keyword.

Kind means the type of messages you're looking for (NOTICE, WANTED, or SALE) and *keyword* is the subject of the messages you'd like to scan. The keyword is optional. You could enter SCAN SALE IBM if you wanted to get a quick look at all the For Sale messages that are specifically about "IBM."

Here, let's look at *all* For Sale messages currently on the board.

Get your pencil ready. After you enter the following command, the system will give you a long list of notices, each with a number and a keyword. Jot down the number of any of the messages that look interesting to you. Remember that CONTROL S will freeze the screen if you can't keep up with the scroll, and CONTROL Q will start it again.

Ready? At the * prompt, enter SCAN SALE.

Now, sit back—this could take a minute. Of course, your list and ours look different, since we're looking at the system at different times. When we scanned the SALE notices, we got 150 of them.

Notice that the list looks something like this:

#	From:	Date:	Keyword:
123	73145,754	13-Jan-84	COMPUTER
124	70300,215	10-Jan-84	DISK.DRIVE
126	70000,1101	12-Jan-84	MARTIN
127	71046,1477	12-Jan-84	SUPER
137	75775,277	20-Jan-84	COMPUTER
141	75775,277	20-Jan-84	COMPUTER
163	72175,70	19-Jan-84	ZX81
169	71655,1600	13-Jan-84	IBM

The first column contains the message number. The next column is the user ID number of the person who posted it, followed by the date the message was posted, and finally, the keyword he or she has chosen for the message.

After the scroll has stopped, pick out one of the messages to read. (From our list, we're picking the one about MARTIN, message number 126.)

Now, at the * prompt, enter the command READ followed by the number of the message you've chosen. In our example, we entered READ 126.

You should then see that message displayed, as we did:

GUITAR FOR SALE

MARTIN 0028G CLASSICAL GUITAR FOR
SALE. BEAUTIFUL CONDITION AND SOUND
FROM THE 1950S. INCLUDES CASE.
\$700. ALSO FAIRBANKS & COLE 1890S
BANJO. FAIR CONDITION \$300. CONTACT
FRED 619-555-9993 OR 70000,1101.

** 126 [70000,1101] 12-Jan-84
MARTIN

The pertinent information about the message—the message number, user ID, date, and keyword—is summarized at the bottom. The system inserted that information, not the user.

Okay, let's post a message and learn a few more commands along the way. (Don't worry if you think you have nothing worthy to say to the nation right now—we'll delete the message before we leave.)

At the * prompt, enter COMPOSE or COM—remember, you can abbreviate all the commands to three letters.

After you have entered the command, the system should respond with a message like "New file 034MCN.TMP created-ready."

Hmmmmmm. That looks familiar. That's the same kind of message you got back in chapter 3 when you composed your first Email. The similarity is significant. Email and the bulletin board use the same "text-editor" program in CompuServe. We'll be learning more about that in the next chapter.

So, we've got a message header and we're ready to compose the noticee. Just as you did in writing your Email, type something like this, remembering to tap the ENTER key at the end of each line on the screen:

```
This is a test to see if I can
post this <ENTER>
message on the National Bulletin
Board.    <ENTER>
```

Now, as in Email, close the message with the exit command: /EX. It goes in the first position of a new line (that is, flush left).

The system responds by displaying the * prompt again.

The message has now been written, but it hasn't been posted yet. You still have an opportunity to add to it. For example, at the prompt, type EDIT and the system displays something like "File 034MCN.TMP - ready."

Notice this is the same file number (in our case, 034MCN.TMP) that we had when we COMPOSED the message, but this time the message doesn't say "New" or "created." Now, let's PRINT the file to see if it says what we think it should say. Enter the command /P 100 (which means "print the first one hundred lines of the message"—since there aren't a hundred lines, it will print everything that's in the message, like this):

```
This is a test to see if I can
post this message on the National
Bulletin Board.
% FLGEOF - End of file
```

The lines have been neatly justified on the screen. Notice that you're informed that you've reached the bottom of the message.

Here, let's add a line. Right where the cursor has stopped, type:

```
We will delete this before  
leaving the <ENTER>  
bulletin board service. <ENTER>
```

And close it with the /EX command. All right, now we're ready to post the message on the bulletin board. At the prompt, type POST NOTICE TEST.

This means "POST this in the NOTICE section (as opposed to WANTED or SALE) with a keyword of "TEST."

Incidentally, this command sometimes takes a minute or so, depending on how busy the system is on a given night. Be patient, and the system will let you know when the message has been posted by displaying the * prompt again.

After you've gotten the prompt, let's see if the message has indeed been posted. We could use the SCAN command to find it and the READ command to look at it, but we'll use a new command—VIEW. This is faster than READ because it makes the system search for all messages with a specific keyword and gives you an option to read them.

Try it. Type VIEW NOTICE TEST and the system will reply with:

```
# From: Date: Keyword:  
279 71635,1025 23-Jan-84 TEST  
-Read (Y, X or RETURN)?
```

Type the Y key (for yes), and we'll see the message:

```
This is a test to see if I can  
post this message on the National  
Bulletin Board.  
We will delete this before  
leaving the bulletin board service.
```

```
** 279 [71635,1025] 23-Jan-84 TEST
```

We're almost ready to move on, but, true to our word, we need to remove our test file from the board. The command is ERASE, followed by the message number. (And, yes, you can erase only messages you posted.)

Enter ERASE 279, using, of course, the message number you received, not 279 as in our example.

Now it's gone. Doubt it? If you try to READ 279 (or whatever your message number is), you get a message that says, "That message number does not exist!"

We're ready to move out now for Public Access, so at the * prompt, enter EXIT, and the system will return you to the Communications menu:

```
CompuServe      Page HOM-30
COMMUNICATIONS
1 Electronic Mail
  (user to user messages)
2 CB Simulation
3 National Bulletin Board
  (public messages)
4 User Directory
5 Ask Aunt Nettie
6 CB Society

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!
```

A DIFFERENT ROUTE

Now, as promised, we'll swing by the public domain area of CompuServe, called Public Access. And to get there, we'll try a different route through a relatively new section of the system called the personal file area.

To get there, enter PER at the prompt on your screen. That means PERsonal file area. After a moment, you should see a menu like this on the screen:

```
FILE MANAGEMENT
1 Brief catalog of files
2 Detailed directory of files
3 Create & edit files via FILGE
4 Type a file's contents
5 Delete a file
6 Rename a file
7 Copy a file
8 Change a file's protection
```

```
9 Upload or download a file  
10 Print a file ($)  
11 Enter command mode
```

Last Menu page. Keep digit
or M for previous menu!

Update Department: CompuServe was still refining this area of the system as we finished this book, so if the PER command did NOT take you to this menu, don't panic. Try G PCS-174. That's the address for the new personal file area. PER or G PCS-174 should take you to the same part of the system.

And, since this is a new part of CompuServe, don't be surprised if there are changes to the menu here, as the CompuServe construction teams make refinements. You should be getting used to that by now and shouldn't be thrown off balance by occasional system revisions.

So, where precisely are we? What is this personal file area, anyway? Well, take a look at the menu on your screen and see if there's a hint.

Most of the options seem to deal with manipulating files—catalogs, directories, renaming, deleting. That probably sounds similar to the functions you use with your word processor or the operating system of your microcomputer when you're off-line. The similarity isn't coincidence.

The personal file area is the private storage section for your on-line files. Using this menu, you can read them, change them or create new ones, and you are the only user who can see what's in your personal file area.

And, as a matter of fact, you've already stored a file here, though you might not remember it. Let's find it with a "catalog" of everything in your file area. In other words, select option 1 from the menu on your screen. The system should respond with:

```
MYMAIL
```

Ah, that looks familiar. Back in chapter 5, you saved your Email under the file name "MYMAIL." The Email program automatically stored your message away in your Personal File Area.

The catalog option gives you a quick look at everything you've stored in your private area.

Now get the FILE MANAGEMENT menu back on your screen (you'll probably need to tap the ENTER key to continue) and select the "Detailed Directory" option (option 2) and compare that with the brief catalog. You should see something like this:

Name	Blocks	Creation	Access
MYMAIL.	2	00:01 20-MAR-84	
		08-APR-84 (4)	
TOTAL	33		
Key S or <ENTER> to continue!			

In other words, the simple catalog gives you only the file names, while the directory gives you a little more information, such as the length of the file (in block of space), the date and time when you created the file and the date you last looked at it.

As you've already figured out, option 4 on the menu displays a file by typing it out on your screen. If you'd like to reread MYMAIL, enter a 4 and CompuServe will ask for the name of the file you want to display.

Most of the other options are straight-forward enough:

- Option 3 allows you to write a new file. (It will ask for a file name—that is, what shall we call it?—and then open a workspace, just as we saw with Email and with the National Bulletin Board.)

- The option to delete a file will ask for the name of the file to remove and then zap it.

- The renaming option asks for the existing file name and then the new name you want to give the file.

- Copy will do just that—duplicate an existing file under a new name.

Option 8 is sort of a throwback to the days when all CompuServe user files were located on a single mainframe computer and files could be transferred easily from one personal file to another. It was done simply by the sender "lowering" the protection level on his file or files then telling the sendee the file name to copy.

These days, it's not that simple. If your personal file area happens to be on the same mainframe computer as someone else, you would be able to lower protection on your own files and allow another user to copy those unprotected files from your own area, once that user knows the file name. But the odds of your being on the same mainframe as your friends are slim.

For the most part, however, this particular function is all but unnecessary for the average user. There are other easy ways of submitting files invisibly to a public access area where they can be retrieved and we'll discuss this procedure in the next section. For the moment, then, don't be concerned with file protection levels and how

to lower them since there's another way to transfer files between users.

By the same token, let's not worry just yet about option 9—upload or download a file. We'll be talking about that in the next chapter.

Option 10 allows you to order a printed copy of any file in your file area from CompuServe's line printers. This is a premium service, which is why it has the "(\$)".

Now, pay particular attention to option 11—enter command mode—because it's one of the reasons we wanted to bring you here in the first place.

We told you earlier that menus in CompuServe are a wonderful way to learn the system, but that there would come a time when you might tire of them, like training wheels on a bicycle after you've learned to ride. Throughout CompuServe there are opportunities to turn off menus and save time (and money) by operating in a sort of expert mode. Command mode here is onc. We'll be showing you others.

Let's see what it looks like. Select option 11 (Command mode) and you should see "OK". No menus, no friendly message advising the next step. Just OK.

The terseness of that prompt has confused and upset many new users, who felt lost without their familiar menus, as if they had fallen off the edge of the earth. That's why CompuServe constructed the File Management menu you just saw. However, once you're comfortable with the neighborhood, you might choose to use Command Mode instead of the menus, just for the speed and convenience.

Everything you could do from the menu, you can do from this OK prompt. For instance, want to catalog your files? Type CAT (ENTER). Want a detailed directory? Enter DIR (ENTER).

Would you like to have CompuServe type out MYMAIL again? Enter TYP MYMAIL (the same command you used on the National Bulletin Board) and CompuServe will understand you to mean, "Type out that MYMAIL file again."

If you wanted to create a new file, say TEST1.TXT, you could enter CREATE TEST1.TXT at the OK prompt, and it would work just as well as option 3 on the File Management menu.

For a more detailed list of the commands available for this area, see the On-line Survival Kit in the back of the book.

(By the way, in your electronic conversations with other CompuServe users, you may hear the OK prompt being referred to by a number of names. For instance, some veteran subscribers to CompuServe still call this area "MicroNet," even though the term has been out of vogue for several years now. It's not unlike the varying lan-

guage of different neighborhoods in a metropolitan area. CompuServe subscribers tend to cling to the terms that were fashionable when they arrived on these electronic shores.)

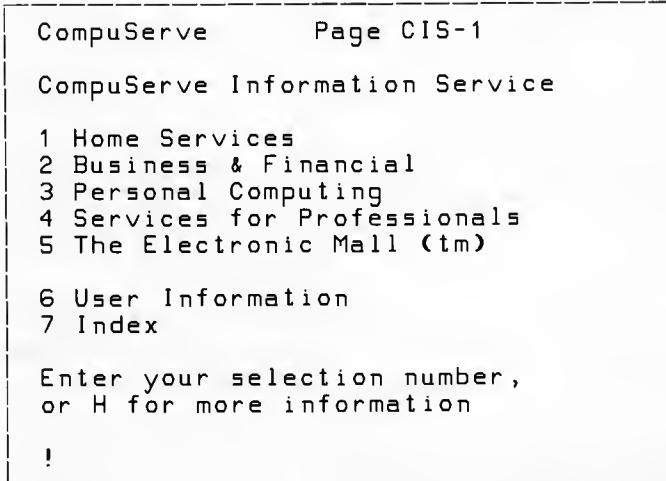
Oh, well, enough of the history lesson. The OK prompt gives us an opportunity to show you something about those menus we've gotten so attached to. It's time you learned the truth—those handy lists of options are just part of a program called Displa (which stands for display) which is being operated by CompuServe itself from an area not unlike the OK prompt you're seeing now. In fact, most of the CompuServe's features we've seen so far can be visited directly from this OK prompt in your personal file area.

In other words, menus are a convenience—not a necessity.

When you log on to the system, CompuServe assumes you want the menus. But some experienced users find menus a bore and a bother. Once they think they can navigate the system without them, they turn the menus off permanently on their account numbers. It may seem impossible to you now that anyone could navigate CompuServe without menus, but it is possible—quite common, actually—and before we finish this book, we'll show you how you can turn off Displa for good.

But for now, that's not the problem. The menus are gone and we want them back. Okay, if Displa is a program, we should be able to "run" it from here, right? Right.

Let's "Request DISPLAY." On your screen, enter R DISPLAY. Voila! The system shows us our old friend at the top of the system.



Now, rejoin us at the OK prompt. And at the bottom of the menu, enter PER (or G CIS-174) to return to the personal file area. When you arrive at that menu, take option 11.

By the way, if you wanted the PER menu again from the OK prompt, you wouldn't have to go around the horn by way of CIS-1. Just enter PER and you'll return to menu mode.

Okay, troops. Let's all get together at the OK prompt. We want to spend the remaining minutes of our on-line tour in Public Access.

PUBLIC ACCESS = FREE

From your storage area you could enter Public Access with the GO command, if you knew the page number in Displa where Access resides (which happens to be PCS-46). But also, as we've learned here, these services actually are programs that can be run from the programming area, so we can just "request" the Access program.

So type R ACCESS. CompuServe will take you directly to Access. (If you don't reach Access with this command, just return to DISPLAY and enter G PCS-46.) You should now see on your screen one of two menus. It should either look like this:

```
Public File Access System
Use ? for help
```

```
Access:
```

Or this:

```
Access:
```

- 1 BRO Browse thru files
- 2 UPL Upload a new file
- 3 EXI Exit from Access
- 4 HEL Help

```
Key digit:
```

The first is Public Access's brief mode, the second is the full-menu mode. The latter is the one we want to deal with in this chapter. So, if what's on your screen is the first example, simply type SET MENU, like this:

```
Public File Access System
Use ? for help
```

```
Access: SET MENU
```

The system should move you into menu mode. (That's just a way of saying to CompuServe, "Hey, hand me that flashlight so I can see what I'm doing!")

Notice that you can switch the menu on and off in Access with the SET command. If you typed SET NO MENU you would be back at the brief mode. We'll talk more about that in chapter 8.

The menu here is simple. Option 4 is Help. If you were here alone, that would be your lifeline. Option 3, EXIT, will take you out of the Access program, back to where you were when you walked in—in our case, the OK prompt.

Let's not worry about Upload for the time being. We'll talk about that one in the next chapter, after you're off-line.

For now, let's see how option 1, the BROwse command, works. You can enter commands here either by the numbers on the menu or by three-letter commands, as in the bulletin board. This is the command that will allow us to scan the database and read descriptions of the various files.

Enter either 1 or BRO at the "Key digit:" prompt.

CompuServe now should display this:

/AGE:

What does this mean?

CompuServe is giving you an opportunity to specify what files you want to BROwse, according to age. For instance, if you visited Public Access once a week, you'd want to look at the files that have been entered in the last seven days. You wouldn't want to examine the entire database every time—there are thousands of files in here!

So, at this prompt you could enter 7, meaning "show me only the files that have been placed in Access within the last seven days."

If you do want to see all the files, just tap ENTER, leaving the /AGE: option blank. For our exercise this time, just tap ENTER.

Now CompuServe says:

/KEY:

This option also allows you to limit the search of the Access database by specifying a keyword. This is similar to the National Bulletin Board, too. If you wanted to see only the files having to do with TRS-80 computers, you could enter TRS here, such as:

/KEY:TRS

The system would skip all the files that don't have a keyword containing the letters TRS.

Incidentally, these keywords are a little more sophisticated than the ones we saw in Bullet. For one thing, people who submit files to Access can specify more than one keyword. Also, you can search for a portion of a keyword. You would simply use an asterisk (*) as a "wild card."

For instance:

/KEY xyz would look for files whose keywords are an exact match with "xyz."

/KEY xyz* would find files that *begin* with "xyz." (Note the asterisk.)

/KEY *xyz finds files that *end* with "xyz."

/KEY *xyz* searches for files that *contain* "xyz."

Or, we can simply leave it blank. Let's do that in this exercise.

We're now BROWSing, with no /AGE or /KEY specifications. Right now you should see on your screen the first file, something like this:

```
[70000,010]  
ADDRES.FED 16-Jan-84 1615  
Accesses: 9
```

```
Keywords: FEDERAL RESERVE ADDRESSES  
ECONOMY
```

```
List of the addresses of public  
relations departments for all the  
Federal Reserve Banks. Useful for  
people who want to send away for  
one of the Fed's free publications.
```

What's all this mean? The number in the square brackets is the user ID number of the person who submitted the file. ADDRES.FED is the name he gave the file. (It could be any name up to six letters, with an "extension" of three letters—that's the .FED part.) That information is followed by the date it was submitted and the number of times it's been accessed (that is, the number of times it's been read).

The keywords and description follow that. These were both placed there by the subscriber who submitted the file to Access.

The file description is followed by another kind of menu:

```
Disposition:
```

- 1 R Read this file
- 2 D Download this file
- 3 T Top Access menu

```
Key digit or ENTER for next:
```

CompuServe wants to know what you want to do with this file. You have four possibilities.

—If it's a text file (words), as the one in our example is, you can read it by entering 1 or *R* at the prompt.

—If it's a program file, you can download it with a number 2 or a *D*. But don't do that yet! We want to discuss both uploading and downloading in Chapter 8. Patience is a virtue.

—Option 3 (or the letter *T*) will allow you to discontinue BROwsing and return to the top menu in Access (the first menu we saw).

—Or, as the bottom line indicates, if you want to see the next file, simply tap ENTER.

Keep BROwsing now, until you find a nice text file, like the one we have in our example. When you do, make a note on that piece of paper beside your computer of the file name and user ID number. We'll use that information in a minute. Then, select the Read option—a 1 or an *R* at the prompt—and look at a little of it.

Remember that here, as in virtually any place in CompuServe, your CONTROL keys will help you. CONTROL S will freeze display. CONTROL Q will resume the display. CONTROL P will stop the file and return you to the Access menu.

After you've read a little of your text file, use CONTROL P and meet us back here.

RENDEZVOUS AT THE ACCESS PROMPT

Okay, now that you've been around the block, let's see what else you can do at the main Access menu.

You should now be back at this menu:

Access:

- 1 BRO Browse thru files
- 2 UPL Upload a new file
- 3 EXI Exit from Access
- 4 HEL Help

Key digit:

Before we leave Access and log off, try one more command. The COP command will copy a file from Access into your private storage

area. Try it on the text file you read earlier. At the prompt, enter COP followed by the user ID number in square brackets and the file name. The system should inform you that it is copying it, then return you to the prompt when it's done.

Oh, and about those square brackets. Some computers don't have square brackets on the keyboard. Your communications software might have them substituted for other keys. Check your owner's manual on that.

If you can't send square brackets at all, not to worry. You can still use the COPy command. Just leave the User ID out and enter COP followed by the file name. (This will take a little longer, since CompuServe will have to search for the file you want, but it will work.)

Very good. Now let's leave Public Access by entering either 3 or EXI. The system acknowledges with:

Thank you for using ACCESS!

If you reached Access from the personal file area, then the EXIT command will return you to the personal file area. Since you're no longer in the Public Access program, the catalog command will now display only the files in your storage area. If you enter that command now, you should see two files listed—MYMAIL and the file that you just copied. This is your copy of the file.

Well, we've covered a lot of territory this evening and you probably want to take some time to think about it. You don't have to return to Displa to log off. Just type BYE or OFF and the system will sign you off with something like:

Off at 19:26 EDT 25-Jan-84
Connect time = 0:55

SUMMARY

In this chapter we looked in on the National Bulletin Board and learned about these commands:

—HELP gives you help on all the other commands used in the bulletin board. For example, HELP VIEW will give you a brief description of VIEW and how to use it.

—SCAN offers a quick look at the numbers and keywords of all the messages posted.

—VIEW is similar to SCAN, except that it pauses after each message and asks if you'd like to read it.

—READ allows you to read a message. For example, READ 124 will display message number 124 on your screen.

—COMPOSE is the command that lets you write a message for the board.

—EDIT, after you have written the message, allows you to change it, using the same edit commands you use in Email.

—POST lets you place the message on the board.

—ERASE removes one of your messages.

—EXIT leaves the bulletin board and returns to the regular service.

In the personal file area, you learned about these commands:

—PER is one of several commands that will take you to the personal file area. Another is EXI (for "exit Displa").

—CAT stands for "catalog" and gives you a list of the files in your storage area.

—TYP file/name, or "type," displays a file on your screen.

—R DISPLAY means "Request Display." This allows you to return to the menu program from the command level of the personal file area.

—R ACCESS, "Request Access," is the way to get to Public Access from the command level of the personal file area.

In our visit to Public Access, you learned these commands:

—BROWSE displays selected files for your inspection.

—/AGE: lets you specify the age of the files you want to see. For example, entering 5 after the /AGE: prompt would find files submitted within the past five days.

—/KEY: allows you to specify keywords of files you're looking for.

—COP will copy a file from Public Access to your storage area.

CHAPTER 8

Where Were We, Anyway?

You've now been around the block, so to speak, in CompuServe. You've seen behind the magic curtain of the menus and realized that they are part of a program called Displa. When you go to the personal file area, you've actually turned off the menu program temporarily and are running around the system in a kind of expert mode.

You're still new enough to the system that not having the menus is probably a little disconcerting. For the next few chapters we'll pop into the personal file area only sparingly. Our reason for showing you this area so early in our tours is twofold.

First, we don't want you to be afraid of the personal file area. Many new subscribers report that they did "something wrong," fell into this section, and panicked. We want you to know that if it happens to you, you can get back to your friendly menus by simply entering R DISPLAY (meaning "Request the Displa program," i.e., gimme back my menus).

But, more importantly, we want you to keep in the back of your mind that there are many shortcuts to getting around CompuServe, once you're familiar with the terrain. Many newcomers complain (rightly so) that the menus are slow, repetitious, time-consuming, and costly in connect-time dollars. Nonetheless, the menus serve their purpose—to keep the new arrivals from getting ensnarled in the undergrowth.

By the time we finish our tours together, we expect you'll be comfortable with the system's layout and pretty darn sick of menus. Then we'll introduce you to a part of the system called Default, where you'll be able to set the "expert mode" for yourself and be done with them for good. Until then, please, patience, Pilgrim.

We would like to go back on-line in this chapter and take another look at the personal file area, this time to see behind another curtain: the text editor.

You'll recall when you wrote your first Email back in chapter 3, we suggested that you select an option called Edit, or FILGE, which stands for File Generator and Editor.

Just as the menus are part of a program called Displa, Edit or FILGE is a program all to itself that can be run from the personal file area. In fact, when you selected that option to write your Email, you were actually running the Edit/FILGE program. You just weren't troubled with those details because Displa tells you only what you need to know. In this chapter we'll take a short on-line tour to see how to use the editing program in areas other than Email; we'll finish up with another quick look into Public Access and finally we'll submit a file to that public database.

So, if you're ready, let's go to it.

Log on as usual and at the bottom of the main menu (CIS-1) enter the PER command that takes you to the personal file area. (That is, at the bottom of the first menu, type PER.)

As we told you, what you type in this part of CompuServe can be viewed by no one other than you (and anyone else who has access to your ID number and password). This section is your on-line disk storage area.

Let's write something into a file we'll call TEST.TXT. At the PER menu, select the Create & edit option, like this:

FILE MANAGEMENT

- 1 Brief catalog of files
- 2 Detailed directory of files
- 3 Create & edit files via FILGE
- 4 Type a file's contents
- 5 Delete a file
- 6 Rename a file
- 7 Copy a file
- 8 Change a file's protection
- 9 Upload or download a file
- 10 Print a file (\$)
- 11 Enter command mode

Last Menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu! 3

CompuServe will now ask you for a file name. Enter TEST.TXT and the system should display "New file TEST.TXT created—ready."

What you've done with this one command is requested the CompuServe editing program and opened a file called TEST.TXT, and now the system is ready to receive your words of wisdom. And we're even going to provide the words this time.

Below the "New file created" message, please type these few lines exactly as they are presented here, mistakes and all. We've worked hard at imbedding those typographical errors so that you can see how the editor part of this text editor works. Here's the message. (Incidentally, we're deliberately making the lines short to accommodate those of you with computers that have forty-character screen widths. Even if you have a computer that accommodates a larger screen width, please humor us here and type in the lines as we have them. It will make this exercise easier to follow. And remember to tap the ENTER key at the end of each screen line.)

```
Hmmmm, now that heading <ENTER>
looks familiar. Where <ENTER>
have I seen tht before? Oh, <ENTER>
yes-it is the same <ENTER>
message I gtwhen I wrote the <ENTER>
first Email back on <ENTER>
tour one. <ENTER>
Well, it should look <ENTER>
familiar because, as <ENTER>
we noted ,it is the same program <ENTER>
as we used in <ENTER>
Email, except this time we're <ENTER>
running it driectly <ENTER>
from the programming area.<ENTER>
After we finish here, <ENTER>
we'll submit this file to <ENTER>
Public Access. <ENTER>
/EX <ENTER>
```

All right, if you followed the instructions in the text, you typed /EX at the bottom of the message and CompuServe returned you to the personal file area.

So, where's the message?

It's been filed in your storage area, along with any other files you've already placed there. To see it, use the directory option (number 2 on the PER menu) and the system will show you something like this:

Name	Blocks	Creation	Access
MYMAIL.	1	00:01 01-Mar-84	
		08-Mar-84 (4)	
TEST.TXT	4	19:43 11-Mar-84	
		29-Feb-84 (4)	
TOTAL	5		

Key S or <ENTER> to continue!

Okay. Now that you've finished composing and have closed your file, let's see how to go about displaying it again. What we need to do is to type it to the screen, just as you did in the last chapter. Ah, yes, the TYP command. Try option 4 and the system begins displaying your message on the screen, after you specify TEST.TXT.

Now, while it's scrolling by, let's take a minute to understand something about how the editing program works. It's a "line editor"—that is, it works on the idea of an invisible line pointer that keeps your place on the screen. As the lines scroll by on your screen, the invisible line pointer drops down one line at a time.

Great, but how can you correct the errors in the file? TYP just shows them to you again.

Well, first we need to reopen the file to edit. So select option 3 on the menu and CompuServe should have displayed on your screen "File TEST.TXT—ready."

Notice the difference between this message and the one you received when you first created the message. The word "New" is missing. What's happened is that the system has reopened TEST.TXT and is ready to receive your editing.

Ah, but where's the message you composed?

Remember what we said about invisible line pointers? How they "point" to each line in the file, one at a time? Right now, the line pointer is just above the first line of text.

Try this and you'll see what we mean. Type /P 1 and the system prints, "Hmmmm, now that heading". The /P 1 is a command that means, "Print one line of the text." In the process, the line pointer has moved down a line, from just above the text to the first line. Try it again, but this time enter /P 2. The system prints:

Hmmmm, now that heading
looks familiar. Where

You see? When you first entered the /P command, the line pointer was on the first line of the text. Since you wanted two lines

displayed, the system printed the line it was on and then moved the line pointer down one line and printed the next line. So when it finished executing your command, it left the line pointer on line 2. (If this seems at all confusing, just hang in there. It'll become clearer as we go along.)

Now enter the command /P 1000. We're asking the impossible, right? We're saying, "print the next 1,000 lines of text," knowing all the while that there aren't a thousand lines in TEST.TXT. Nonetheless, the program is going to give it a try.

Look at what happened on your screen. It printed "looks familiar. Where" (the second line of the file, which is where we had the line pointer when we issued the command). That was followed by "have I seen tht before? Oh," (the third line), and so forth, down to the end of the story, where the editing program, realizing it's been had, reports "% FLGEOF — End of file."

That's an "error message." It just means, "I tried, boss, but I couldn't complete that last instruction." But, of course, that's no problem. We didn't expect it to find 1,000 lines to print.

Where are we now in the text? You didn't get the PER menu prompt, so you haven't returned there. No, you're still in the editing program and working on TEST.TXT, but now the line pointer has reached the bottom of the file. If you were to type in a line or two here and close the file again, you would have added some new lines to the bottom of your original TEST.TXT file.

Okay, let's go back to the top of the file—that is, let's move the line pointer to the top with a /T command.

(Note that *all* of the editing commands are preceded by a slash (/), just as the commands in CB are. Any new line that starts out with a slash is interpreted by the editing program as a command.)

So, enter /T and . . . hmmm, nothing happened. Maybe it didn't work.

Not to worry! Remember that since the line pointer is invisible, it doesn't change anything on the screen itself. But it is indeed at the top. To check it, type /P 1. See? The system displays "Hmmmm, now that heading"—our first line.

And, if /T takes you to the top, you can bet that /B will take you to the bottom of the file. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. While we're at the top of the story, let's get down to some serious editing. We need to move the pointer to the line containing our first typo, which is *tht* in the third line. Of course it should be *that*.

To change it, first you'll need to tell the system to find—or locate—the first occurrence below the line pointer of the combination *tht*. The command is /L (for Locate).

So, enter /L/tht.

Note the second slash between L and *tht*. Also note that there are no quotation marks around the word we're looking for.

Again, nothing seems to have happened on the screen, but you know by now that the editing program has moved its invisible line pointer to the first line containing the "string" we're looking for. If you type /P, it will display the line "have I seen tht before? Oh," and, of course, this means that the pointer is set to a new line.

Now we're ready to correct the word. We need to tell the system to change *tht* to *that*. The command is: /C/tht/that ("change *tht* to *that*"). If you want to make sure the change was made, type /P again. What appears on your screen now is "have I seen that before? Oh,".

Now we're ready to find and fix the next error. Go back a few pages in the book and look at the fifth line. There it is—*gtwhen* should be *got when*. So, type /L/gtwhen.

You now know that the pointer has been moved to that line, so you don't have to enter /P to look at it (unless you want to); just enter /C/gtwhen/got when.

When you enter /P, the system shows you the corrected line: "message I got when I wrote the".

The next error we need to find is in line 10. See it on the printed example? It says "we noted ,it is"—the space and the comma are reversed. So, let's look for *it*. Enter /L/it and let's look at the line we've found. (Enter /P.)

Oops. We've found the wrong *it*. The line on which the pointer has stopped is "Well, it should look"—and there's nothing wrong with it.

The point here is that the editing program will look for the *first* occurrence of the "string" you're looking for below the current position of the line pointer. So we need to tell the system to continue searching. Enter /L (with nothing following the L—the program will remember the last string it was searching for). This time when you print the line, you should have: "we noted, it is the same program". To change the sentence, enter /C/ ,it/, it.

Note that the editing program considers spaces to be just another character, so you can replace them as if they were letters. A faster way to have found this incorrect string, incidentally, would have been to search for ,it rather than just *it*.

Okay, the final error in the file that needs correcting is the misspelling of *directly* (as *driectly*). Locate it (with /L/driectly, or just /L/drie) and change it (with /C/drie/dire).

Now we're finished editing and we must close the file again. Enter /EX and up comes the PER menu, signifying that you're no longer running the editing program.

This has been a very fundamental look at editing on the system. There are many additional commands available. Also, there are ways some terminal programs and word processors can prepare files off-line and upload the files to the editing program. But we don't want to use up your connect time going over these things here. We'll take that up later in the chapter, after you've logged off and we can settle back and chat.

CONTRIBUTING TO PUBLIC ACCESS

Now, let's suppose that the file you've just created is something you'd like to contribute to the public-domain files and programs in Public Access. In the last chapter we saw how to retrieve material from Access. This time, let's see how you would submit a file to that large public database.

First, let's take a different route to access—via the page numbers. Enter G PCS-46.

The screen may now display this:

```
Access:  
Public File Access System  
Use ? for help  
  
Access:
```

If you enter the SET MENU command, you'll receive the menu we had in the last chapter. But it's not necessary in this exercise. Remember that the menus are just a convenience. The commands in Access will work with or without the menu.

And we'll use a new command this time—SUB, meaning SUBmit.

At the prompt enter SUB TEST.TXT telling the system you are submitting the file now in your storage area called TEST.TXT. The system will then peek into your file area to see if it can find a file by that name. (If it can't, it'll tell you so at this point and let you try again.)

Since it does find the file we've created together here (assuming you spelled TEST.TXT correctly), CompuServe will respond with:

Notice:

ACCESS is for the distribution
of original software. Submitters
are subject to copyright laws.
Commercial advertising or
catalogs are not permitted.

Visible (Y or N)?

Don't be misled. Even though the message says "software," text files like the one you've just written also are permitted.

Yes, there is free, public-domain software available in Public Access, and at the end of this chapter we'll be talking about how to download free programs into your computer for use off-line. Also, we'll show you how you can upload your programs to Public Access for public-domain distribution, if you'd like.

More on that later. For now, time is money. Let's get on with it.

Notice that the prompt on your screen after the Access notice says "Visible (Y or N)?" Files can be submitted to Access as visible, where they can be seen by any subscriber who happens to BROWSE that area of the database. And, if a user can "see" the file, he can read (or access) it. Invisible files don't show up on a BROWSE of Access.

For this tour, let's submit TEST.TXT as an invisible file. Since the file contains nothing that anyone else would find useful, there's no need for it to appear to others. Besides, many users regularly BROWSE the new files that have been submitted and it's a nuisance to have to wade through a number of TESTs submitted by new users.

So, to the "Visible (Y or N)?" prompt, answer with an *N* and Access will send you the message, "Copying file to ACCESS . . ." followed by

File will be present within 24
hours.

Files are subject to being purged;
see ? PURGE for details.

What this means is that there's a twenty-four-hour delay between your submission of a file and its addition to Access. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, the CompuServe system is actually being run for a number of "host" computers. At any time on the service, you're actually using one of those hosts, and as we've said, when you receive a "Request Recorded" message, you are moving from one host computer to another. Your ID number and file area actually exists on a host computer, too.

Files contained in Access must be made available to all the host computers and that copying is done in the wee hours of the morning.

That's part of the reason for the delay. Also, CompuServe officials want a chance to look over what is being submitted to its database and reserve the right to deny access to files they consider objectionable, such as pirated software.

And speaking of such things, you probably noticed the reference to the PURGE option in Access. If you want to read about it on the screen, enter ?PURGE—or, just follow along on the page here and we'll tell you about it.

Files in the Public Access database are subject to being purged, or removed, if they were submitted more than thirty days previous and haven't been retrieved or if the total size of the public database exceeds 9 million bytes and the files haven't been retrieved very often.

Okay, let's exit Access (with an EXI at the Access prompt). When the system displays the menu, log off the system and settle back. We'll go over a few more points before calling it a night.

A FEW MORE WORDS ABOUT ACCESS

Now that you're off-line again, and we have a little time to stretch out with the clock not running, let's fill in a few gaps.

First, about Access. . . .

While you were on-line, we suggested that you submit TEST.TXT as an invisible file just for neatness' sake—we didn't want to clutter up the database for other users with a lot of TEST.TXTs. Fine for them, but we've robbed you of an opportunity to see what it looks like to submit a visible file. Well, we hope this makes it up to you.

If you had responded to the "Visible (Y or N)?" prompt with a Y, then CompuServe would have displayed:

Keywords:

What the system is asking for is several words that describe what the file contains. You'll recall in our first visit to Access, we searched at one point for files that contained a certain keyword—here's where the keywords come from.

After you've typed in a few keywords and tapped ENTER, the system will prompt you with:

**Description (blank line
when finished):**

Here you can type in several lines that describe what this file is all about, tapping ENTER at the end of each line.

When you're finished, you tap ENTER a second time ("a blank line") and Access will ask, "Is this okay (Y or N)?"

In other words, "Do you want to do that again, or did you get it right the first time?" If you enter Y for yes, it's okay; the system will copy it to Access.

Then, in twenty-four hours, BROwsing new files submitted to Access or your file area would show something like this:

```
[70000,1000]
TEST.TXT 30-Jan-84 12825
Accesses: 15 05-Jan-84
```

Keywords: TEST, TEXT, FILE, FIRST,
EXPERIMENT

This is my first file in Public
Access.

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

We also promised that we'd have a few words about "uploading" and "downloading," some words that may be new to you. People new to networking are often confused by these terms, but they don't need to be.

Uploading just means sending something from your personal computer into the big computers at CompuServe.

Downloading means going the other way—taking something from CompuServe and storing it in your computer.

It may help you keep these terms straight by thinking of CompuServe's big computer system as being on top and your little micro being on the bottom. To send something to CompuServe, you need to send it "up"; to get something, you need to bring it "down."

Technically, anything you send to the system is uploaded, and anything you receive is downloaded. However, CompuServe uses these terms when specifically referring to the sending and receiving of program files. To do this, CompuServe uses a special routine called "error checking."

This gets a little complicated, so bear with us. You may want to read this section a second time.

You know from using your microcomputer around the house that programs can't be "almost correct." If there's a minor error in the programming, it won't function properly. This is a concern when sending program files by telephone lines—a bit of static in the line could destroy a file.

To avoid this, CompuServe has designed something called the "B Protocol." It's a little too complicated for a discussion right now—particularly after you've just returned from another night on the system. There's a fuller discussion of it in chapter 16. This nifty protocol allows your microcomputer to send and receive programs from CompuServe's Public Access area and some other parts of the system that we'll see later.

But there's a catch.

The protocol is available only in some communications programs, most notably the Vidtex program produced by CompuServe itself. You may have purchased a copy of CompuServe's Vidtex program when you signed up for CompuServe. If not, you may be able to order it from the Feedback section of the system. Unfortunately, it's not available for every microcomputer on the market. However, CompuServe is adding more versions of Vidtex all the time, so you should keep an eye on the bulletins around the system for new releases.

The long and the short of it is: You have to be using a terminal program that "recognizes" this B Protocol (such as Vidtex) in order to use the upload and download features of the system.

Now, assume you are using Vidtex or another program that supports this special protocol. If you find a program in Public Access that you want to have on disk to use off-line, all you have to do is select the *D* option of the menu:

Disposition:

- 1 R Read this file
- 2 D Download this file
- 3 T Top Access menu

Key digit or ENTER for next:

Use a 2 or a *D*. CompuServe will then ask you for the name you want to give the file on your disk—that is, on your machine.

After that, CompuServe takes over. It will get the first part of the program in memory, then actually turn on your disk drive and send you the first part.

A warning: On a long program, this can take a while. A 32K program could take up to twenty minutes to transfer! (A "K" is about 1,000 bytes, or characters, of information.)

While the download is taking place, CompuServe also will display numbers and plus signs on your screen, something like:

```
1+++++2+++++3+++++4+++++ etc.
```

This is just to assure you that nothing's broken. The transfer is still going on.

After the file has been downloaded, CompuServe will notify you of that. Later, when you log off, you should be able to run the program you've downloaded just as if you'd typed it yourself.

Upload works similarly. If you have an original program that you want to submit to Public Access, you select the upload option from the main Access menu:

Access:

- 1 BRO Browse thru files
- 2 UPL Upload a new file
- 3 EXI Exit from Access
- 4 HEL Help

Key digit:

Type a 2 or UPL. The system will then ask for the name of the file on your disk that you wish to transfer. (Obviously, you'll have to have the proper disk in the machine. CompuServe is smart, but not smart enough to look through your disk file box.)

After you enter the file name, it will begin transferring the file from you to CompuServe and will inform you when it's done.

For more information on error-free file transfer, consult the instructions with your Vidtex program.

Finally, there are more commands available for the Access program. For details, see the On-line Survival Kit in the back of this book.

MORE ON EDITING

In this chapter and in previous ones, we've taken a running leap at CompuServe's editing program. Since it's used throughout CompuServe—in Email, the National Bulletin Board, some of the financial services, and in Access, among others—we really need to take a few minutes for a closer look at the commands.

Here, in one neat package, is an overview of the editing system

and a summary of those commands for quick reference. Included here are some commands that we didn't use in this chapter's tour. The next time you're exploring the system on your own, give them a try.

First, a few rules and terms:

—Remember Edit is the same program that some people on the system may refer to as FILGE. CompuServe is phasing out the use of the word FILGE in favor of Edit, but the program itself isn't changing. The commands you've learned here should work whether we call the program FILGE or Edit.

—In writing messages, every command begins with a forward slash. If a line does not begin with a slash, the computer assumes it is text.

—The word *string* means one or more consecutive pieces of text on a line. A string can contain spaces, tabs, punctuation marks, or numbers.

—In the following discussion, "current line" means the line on which you are working.

—When using the writing and editing service, it is helpful to think in terms of an invisible pointer that marks the position of the current line. You can direct the line pointer to move up or down your file. The pointer can be directed to move downward line by line from the first line of your text file, searching for information to be displayed, changed, or erased.

THE COMMANDS

—/EX is used to exit the writing/editing service and return to command mode.

—/T positions the line pointer at an imaginary line just before the first line of the file. This allows you to insert new lines above the current first line of the file.

—/PN displays a specified number (N) of lines in the file. If N is omitted, only the current line will be displayed. For example, /P3 will display three lines starting with the current line. (Tip: /T followed by pressing ENTER and /P1000 and ENTER will display the entire contents of any file, unless it is over 1,000 lines long.)

—/L/string scans the lines following the current line one by one until the first occurrence of the specified string is located. To display the line located, give the /P command. Example: If you were to type in "This is an easy project" in your text file, and you find this typo when you are proofreading your file, you can open up your file again and search for a unique string (in this case "project" for example).

Type in the following line to locate the typo: /L/projeekt <hit ENTER>. Caution: Your pointer must be on a line *above* the line you are searching for in order to use /L/string. It always searches downward in the file. (Tip: If you give the /T command just before the /L/string command, you will be able to locate a string above the current line.)

—/C/oldstring/newstring, the change command, replaces any specified string in the current line with a new string: oldstring = the string to be replaced, newstring = the replacement string. (If newstring is omitted, then oldstring will be erased.) For example: "This is an easy project." Use this command to change the spelling of *projekkt*: /C/ckt/et <hit ENTER key>. The /P command issued after the change command will display the line in its changed form. "This is an easy project."

—/A/string adds the specified string to the end of the current line. The line pointer will remain on that line after the command is executed.

—/DN deletes the number of lines specified starting with the current line. The pointer will be positioned at the line following the last line erased. N is the number of lines to be erased; if omitted, only the current line is erased.

—/B moves the line pointer to the last line of your file.

—/N, meaning next, moves your line pointer down the file a specified number of lines from its current position.

—/Nn. If you enter *n* as a positive number (let's say 2), the line pointer advances down your file 2 lines (it would look like this: /N2). Conversely, if you enter *n* as a negative number (let's say -3), the line pointer backs up the file -3 lines (it would look like this: /N-3).

CHAPTER 9

Interlude: Taking Stock

If you were a mountain climber and CompuServe were your challenge, you'd be about halfway up the face by now.

In our first eight chapters together, you've seen how to:

- Navigate the system with the menus.
- Take some express routes with the powerful GO command.
- Use the on-line Index feature to search for services on CompuServe.
- Send and receive electronic mail.
- And party with other CompuServe users on the popular CB Simulation—talking publicly, privately, and semiprivately.

You've seen behind the curtain of this Oz and found that the menus are all part of a program called Displa which can be turned off and on. And you're a step ahead of many new CompuServe users in that you've met the OK prompt and it no longer intimidates you (we hope!).

You've learned how to use CompuServe's editing program and you've explored the wonders of the massive Public Access database.

By now you have every right to be a little overwhelmed by the size of this new electronic world you're traveling. It's larger than you probably thought when you first got interested in CompuServe.

Also, we wouldn't be surprised if you feel a little shaky about some of the commands used in the various corners of the system we've seen so far. By design, our tours to date have taken you through the heart of CompuServe at a rather rapid clip. We have your pocketbook at heart; we want you to see as much of the system

in as little connect time as possible. If there are sections of CompuServe you're unsure of, we strongly urge you to reread the chapters here and then explore on your own.

Above all, we don't want our words to serve as a summation of CompuServe, but rather a starting point for you. The system is constantly changing. It's likely that between the time these thoughts leave our word processors and reach your hands and eyes, the wizards at CompuServe will have added new features to the system and modified some of the existing ones. If we've successfully sold you on the value of an explorer's spirit, then you'll be excited by these unexpected changes—not upset by them.

But enough preaching. What lies ahead?

In the coming chapters we'll show you the wide assortment of games available on CompuServe, from traditional fare, like the blackjack game we played in chapter 3, to exciting multiplayer games that allow you to compete against strangers across the country.

Also, we'll be looking at the business and financial features on CompuServe, from stock quotes to shop- and bank-at-home services.

And, starting with chapter 10, we'll explore what some consider the most satisfying part of CompuServe: the special-interest groups. If CompuServe is Micropolis, the electronic community, then the special-interest groups (called SIGs) are its neighborhoods. In many ways, the SIGs represent the culmination of all that's exciting about CompuServe's conferencing, databases, and bulletin boards.

BUT FIRST . . .

All of that will get underway starting with the next chapter. But before we start the climb again, we thought it would be a good idea to devote this chapter to filling in some gaps in some of what we've told you so far. So, this is a potpourri of additional CompuServe commands, services, features, and shortcuts.

We'll look at how you can change some of what's being displayed on your screen by using an area called Default.

We'll learn how to change a password and some of the importance of on-line "housekeeping."

We'll also look at a few important CONTROL codes (and summarize those we've seen so far) and learn a handy little tidbit about Email.

We'll wrap up with a look at Feedback, the area of the system that's designed for your comments, complaints, and suggestions.

DEFALT CAN BE A FRIEND

It's possible that the way CompuServe's information is presented on your computer screen just doesn't look right.

Sure, you can read it, but maybe you have a computer that types both capital and lowercase letters and all you're getting from CompuServe is capital letters.

Or perhaps the length of your lines looks funny. Maybe you have a computer with a screen that is eighty characters wide and CompuServe is sending lines to you that are only half that width. You may have a computer with a screen that is thirty-two characters wide and you're getting a couple of lines that fill up the screen's width entirely, then a third line that is a few characters long, followed by a couple of more new lines that fill up the screen width again.

If that's the case, you have a Defalt problem.

Wait! Before you throw your hands up in disgust or think about selling your computer for one that matches the way CompuServe sends its information, be advised that all is not lost.

You can change the way CompuServe sends information to your screen. Or, to put it a better way, you can change the way your computer interacts with CompuServe.

Remember when you first logged on and the nosy system started asking you questions about what kind of computer you had and what kind of terminal program you were using? The system was not simply taking a poll. It was trying to determine how you wanted the information delivered to your screen.

There's a chance you gave it the wrong information or a better chance it couldn't determine what kind of machine or kind of terminal program you were using. The CompuServe computer took its best shot which may not have been the perfect shot.

From the first menu on CompuServe, you can visit Defalt through a selection called User Information. If you choose that menu, here's what you will see:

CompuServe Page CIS-4

USER INFORMATION

- 1 What's New
- 2 Command Summary & Usage Tips
- 3 Feedback to CompuServe
- 4 Order Products, Guides, etc.
- 5 Change Terminal Settings
- 6 Change Your Password

- 7 Billing: Your Charges, Rates,
Options, Making Changes
- 8 Logon Instructions & Numbers
- 9 Electronic Bounce Back

Choice number 5 from this menu allows you to alter and "fine-tune" the way information is being delivered to you. It's called the Defalt program. (Oh, and yes, we know that you spell that *default*, but for technical reasons, CompuServe likes to hold its program names to six letters.)

The bad news is this: It's not an easy program to understand. Some of the options involve "real form feeds" and "simulated form feeds," tabs, parity, and other semitechnical settings. But the good news is that we can put these problems off for a while. We'll look at only a small portion of Defalt right now and wait until a later chapter to look closely at this powerful program. The immediate concern generally deals with capital and lowercase letters and with the length of lines. And these are easy to change.

The Defalt program has an extensive menu:

- Welcome to DEFALT
- 1 Instructions
- 2 Setting Your Terminal Type
- 3 Setting Your Logon Actions
- 4 Setting Delays for Printers
- 5 View or Change Current
Terminal Parameters
- 6 Exit DEFALT

Number 1 on the menu is instructions, which gives an overview of the specific things you can do with Defalt. If you're somewhat familiar with computer terms, you may have no trouble at all understanding the text.

If you simply want to go into Defalt, make a couple of changes, and get out, choose number 5 which is "View or Change Current Terminal Parameters." This section will allow you to see your current settings (or defaults) and ask you if you want new ones.

For example, let's say you have a computer that has an eighty-character width and all the lines you've been receiving from CompuServe so far are short. You ask to see your terminal parameters by choosing number 5 and you'll see something like this:

Your Terminal Type:

Other

Baud Rate: 300

Current Terminal Parameters:

1 Terminal width	32 CHARACTERS
2 Page size is now	0 LINES
3 Form Feeds are	REAL
4 Horizontal Tabs are	SIMULATED
5 Terminal Supports	UPPER/LOWER
6 Cap Lock is	OFF
7 Line Feeds are	SENT
8 Parity is	EVEN
9 Blank Lines are	SENT

Select item to be changed or
press <ENTER> for no change.

!

You can solve your problem by going to selection 1 and changing your terminal width from thirty-two to eighty.

TERMINAL WIDTH 32 CHARACTERS
<ENTER> LEAVES IT UNCHANGED
HOW MANY CHARACTERS PER LINE
FOR THIS TERMINAL?

If you have an eighty-character screen, you should type eighty and press ENTER. That will correct your problem of short lines.

If you have a couple of long lines and a short one, it's probably because you have a computer with a thirty-two-character or forty-character display and CompuServe is sending seventy-two-character or eighty-character lines. In that case, you should go to the same menu and set the line lengths to suit your own computer.

Now, what about all those uppercase letters? You know your computer can generate lowercase, but CompuServe doesn't seem to want to cooperate.

That's found under Terminal Supports, number 5 from the terminal listing. Let's say your computer can create or receive both capital and lowercase letters, but it's only receiving capital letters from CompuServe. Then when you look at Terminal Supports, you're likely to see:

1 TERMINAL SUPPORTS UPPER AND LOWER CASE. CAPS LOCK IS ON.
2 TERMINAL SUPPORTS UPPER AND LOWER CASE. CAPS LOCK IS OFF.

- 3 TERMINAL SUPPORTS UPPER CASE ONLY.
- 4 TERMINAL SUPPORTS LOWER CASE ONLY.

CURRENT SETTING IS 3
<ENTER> LEAVES IT UNCHANGED
KEY CHOICE:

If you see a 3 after the Current Setting report, it means CompuServe thinks you have a terminal that sends and receives capital letters only. If you see a 1, it means the CompuServe computer knows your terminal can send and receive both capital and lowercase letters but for some reason, you want to deal only in capital letters. If your terminal has both capital and lowercase letter capability, choose 2 and press ENTER.

You should feel free to experiment with Default. When you are ready to leave the Default area, you'll be asked if you want to make the changes you just made permanent or temporary for this session only. If you're using the computer you normally use, make them permanent. That way, you won't have to worry about these defaults the next time you log on. But if you want to just "try on" some Default changes, make them temporary and drive them around the block awhile. You can always come back later and make the changes permanent. And, remember, "permanent" in CompuServe just means "keep them that way until I change them again." (Keep that in mind in the next few chapters when we begin our tours of the SIGs.)

In fact, using Default proves one very important thing about CompuServe. Nothing is engraved in stone as far as your using the system is concerned. Flexibility is there. It just takes time to learn how to make the system suit your needs.

On your next visit to the system, swing by the Default area of the system and see if you have your settings the way you want them.

THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE YOU

As far as CompuServe is concerned, your name is your user ID number.

The reason is obvious. How many John Smiths do you think are CompuServe subscribers? And when John Smith logs on CB or any other place in the system, he has the option of calling himself anything he'd like, from Abbott to Zorro. Thus, the assignment of a number to each user isn't only for CompuServe record-keeping pur-

poses but it's a means of identifying each user, no matter what name is connected to that number.

Everyone who is a subscriber to CompuServe has the opportunity to know your user ID. People use it when they send you electronic mail, for example. Remember when you wrote yourself a letter? When it asked the user to send it to, you didn't enter a name. You entered the ID number. When you called up a list of people who were on the CB channels at the same time you were there, they were listed by their user ID numbers, no matter what strange names they were calling themselves.

In this community your user ID is the public part of your identification.

And your password is the private part of your ID and *should be kept that way*. If your user ID is the worst-kept secret on CompuServe, your password should be the best-kept secret.

You received a password when you received your start-up kit. After you have completed the on-line sign-up information, a second password is generated for you and mailed to your address. That second password is valid after you have used two additional hours beyond your free connect time or seven days after the date you entered your on-line sign-up information, whichever comes first.

You use your password only in one location in CompuServe. That's when you log on. But it's the personal passkey that unlocks the door. Keep it a secret. There is no reason anyone should know your password but you.

CHANGING YOUR PASSWORD

If you suspect anyone knows your password, change it immediately.

In fact, you ought to change your password once a month as a matter of habit, just in case someone has discovered the word or words that let you into the system.

You can change your own password by selecting User Information from the top CompuServe menu. A submenu lists Changing Your Password. Choose that selection and answer the questions.

Old Password:

(Type your old password here and press ENTER.)

New Password:

(Type your new password here and press ENTER.)

Next, you'll see a few lines of what seems like code. If the system was successful in copying the new password, you'll get the message "Password change successful."

CompuServe says that the most secure password consists of two nonrelated words with a symbol between them. In one of its booklets, CompuServe gives the example BOAT%TOUCH. Probably the password that came with your starter kit contained two unrelated words separated by a nonletter symbol.

When you are changing your own password, remember that it can be up to twenty-four characters, but not less than eight characters. One of those characters must be something other than a letter of the alphabet.

Your password should be kept in a secure place. What if it's so safe and secure you can't find it? And you can't remember it? Don't ask CompuServe to help you remember it. No one at CompuServe knows it either.

But there is a way out of the dilemma. If you lose or forget your password, you can call CompuServe's Customer Service Department and ask that a new password for your user ID be generated and mailed to you at the address on file for your account.

If there's anything sacred at CompuServe, it's a password. The reason should be obvious. Someone who discovers your password can find your user ID easily. And before you know it, the thief can enter the system and charge who-knows-how-much to your account. To confound you further, the thief could change the password so you can't log on with your own number and password. That's why it's extremely important you notify CompuServe if your password doesn't work with your user ID. Be sure you're not making some kind of silly mistake. And if you're not, notify CompuServe immediately to avoid possible charges which you didn't create.

KEEPING YOUR ON-LINE HOUSE CLEAN

Remember when you were a kid at camp and your counselor harped continually about "housekeeping" around the old bunkhouse?

Or do you recall how your third-grade teacher threatened you with horrible punishment unless you kept your desk clean? It was called "housekeeping."

This chapter proves that you have to "take care of business" if you want CompuServe to work best for you. The service is remarkable, but it can't do everything. It can't keep you from making a stupid

mistake and giving your password to someone. It can't read your mind when you wish it would send you capital and lowercase letters instead of all capital letters.

The service has no idea when files in your disk file area of the system are no longer needed. When they become useless, you're going to have to sweep them out yourself. A disk storage area of 128,000 characters is provided as part of the service you signed up for. If your files on the CompuServe disks grow beyond that limit, you'll be assessed an extra monthly charge. If that happens, don't gripe. The contract you sign with CompuServe says that if you're storing more than 128,000 characters in CompuServe's memory, it's going to cost you extra. It says nothing about how you'll be forgiven if you forget to remove old files which aren't of use any longer.

With this new service comes new responsibilities for you. Don't forget them. You may not get a punishment from your third-grade teacher or a bawling out from your camp counselor, but you'll wind up wishing you had been a better housekeeper.

FEEDBACK'S FOR EVERYBODY

CompuServc is rightfully proud of its system, but it realizes that you may have questions, suggestions, and comments to make about it, and the system provides a special place for them. It's called Feedback, and the time you spend there is free. In other words, in Feedback you're not charged for your connect time.

Sometime when you're on-line, you should drop by CIS-8 and see it for yourself. Sections of Feedback are set aside for questions about the system and problems you might be having, or ideas you have for improving the system.

If you select an option for making a comment, the system will open a file on which you can write—like a special Email. In fact, the same Edit (or FILE) commands are in use in the letter, but you don't have to worry about posting it. It automatically goes to the CompuServe authorities, who will answer you either by phone or Email.

Also available in Feedback are user manuals for various CompuServe features, gifts and computer accessories, and software. For instance, we've mentioned already that CompuServe produces its own communications program called Vidtex which allows you to download software from the system in Public Access and elsewhere in

the system. If you don't already have a copy of Vidtex, you can drop by Feedback and see if it's available for your system. If so, you can order it while on-line and the program will be mailed to you and charged to your account.

EMAIL

You can use it as a real time saver in Email if you have a form letter you want to keep in your on-line disk storage area. For example, some subscribers have a regular introductory Email they send to new friends they make on the system. They don't type in the Email each time—they load it in from their personal storage area in the programming area.

Here's how:

Suppose you had a letter of introduction you wanted to use as a form letter. First, you'd create it in your storage area, using the editing program and closing it with the /EX command as always. You can keep that file in storage as long as you like.

When you wanted to mail it, you would simply go to Email (G EMA-4 would be a good express route), and you'd see this familiar menu:

CompuServe	Page EMA-4
CREATE a new message in your temporary workspace using:	
1 EDIT (FILGE)	
2 ICS	
3 File from disk space	
EDIT message in workspace using:	
4 EDIT (FILGE)	
5 ICS	
6 SEND message from workspace	
7 Information on EDIT (FILGE)	
8 Information on ICS	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

Notice option 3, "File from disk space." Yes, that's exactly what it does—loads that file into your workspace, just as if you'd typed it in there. If you enter 3 at the prompt, the system would respond with:

CompuServe Page EMA-7

Name the input file, ? for help,
or <ENTER> to quit

:

It's waiting for the name of the file you gave the letter when you created it in the programming area. After you enter it, CompuServe will load the file from your storage area and allow you to return to EMA-4.

From here on, it's just as if you had typed this letter into Email. With the edit option, 4, for example, you can open the workspace and read it or change it as you would any other Email file, closing it with the /EX command. And when you're ready to mail it, you would use option 6, as always.

NAVIGATION COMMANDS

In earlier chapters we've introduced you to some valuable CONTROL codes. Among them:

—CONTROL C, which will interrupt any program you're running on the system, like a "bailout" key.

—CONTROL S, which freezes the display, and CONTROL Q, which resumes it.

There are a few more CONTROL keys you can use around CompuServe, including a real time saver, CONTROL P.

You met the CONTROL P command back in chapter 6, when we told you how to end a TALK session with a CONTROL P. But it has an even more powerful function when you're traveling through familiar menus. There, you can use CONTROL P to interrupt the menu and take you immediately to the next prompt. This is handy if you know precisely where you're going and don't want to waste time reading familiar menus.

For instance, suppose you wanted to read dispatches posted by the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, off the HOM-10 menu. If you knew that page address, you might use CONTROL P to get you there faster from the top of the system.

CompuServe Page CIS-1

CompuServe Information Service

1 Home ^P

^P Interrupt.

!

Here we've entered a CONTROL P right after the beginning of the top menu and CompuServe has stopped the menu, acknowledged the CONTROL P interrupt, and given us the prompt. That is the prompt that would have appeared at the bottom of the CIS-1 menu, but we've said, "Don't bother, CompuServe—I know what it looks like. Just give me the prompt." At the prompt, we would enter G HOM-10.

Suppose we're still in a hurry when the next menu displays:

CompuServe Page HOM-10

NEWS/WEATHER/SPORTS

News Services

- 1 The Washington Post (\$)
- 2 St. Louis Post-Dispatch
- 3 AP Videot^P

^P Interrupt.

!

We enter a CONTROL P right after we see the feature we want, number 2, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. Again, the menu is stopped and the prompt is given. We can then enter 2 and the system will proceed:

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please

Et cetera. The point is, if you are familiar with the territory, you don't have to sit and watch menus go by. CONTROL P is for the anxious.

And while we're at it, you may have noticed by now that CompuServe supports what's called a type-ahead capability. That means that you can enter your command *before* the prompt is displayed and CompuServe will honor it when it gets to the prompt.

For instance, if you had a menu of ten items and you know you

want option 2, you can enter the 2 before the prompt appears. The system displays the rest of the menu and the prompt; then it will go right on to execute your request for option 2.

A comment about both CONTROL P and the type-ahead capabilities: They work best when you're connected to the system through a direct CompuServe node, rather than Tymnet or Telenet. The latter are sometimes noticeably slower than the regular CompuServe nodes. In using hurry-up commands like CONTROL P, you'll notice that it takes a little longer for the system to receive the instructions. All we can suggest is that you experiment with them and see if they are useful to you.

MORE NAVIGATION COMMANDS

Finally, there are some additional navigation commands you should know about. You've seen how the *S* command at a menu prompt will scroll a message, and how *T* will take you to the top of the system, and *M* will return you to the menu page.

There are a few more specific commands in this family that you might try out the next time you're on-line. For example:

N—NEXT can be entered at any prompt within related pages of information. This selects the next menu item from the most recently used menu without redisplaying the menu.

F—FORWARD displays the next page in a series of pages. A single ENTER key will do the same thing.

B—BACKWARD returns to the page preceding the current page.

P—PREVIOUS goes to the previous item from the last selected menu. For example, if 5 was the last choice, *P* will display item 4.

R—RESEND displays the current page. This is useful if the current page has scrolled off the screen.

The System's "Neighborhoods"— The SIGs

Newcomers to CompuServe generally are awed by its size and its variety of information and services. Some, in fact, throw their hands up in frustration. There's just too much. It's too big, too impersonal to be of much value. It's just too difficult to understand.

If that happens, probably it's because the user hasn't taken the time to explore the system and find the islands in the CompuServe stream that provide personal, even friendly, service and communication.

One of the ways CompuServe has made the service friendly as well as helpful is by creating special-interest groups, known as SIGs or forums.

Special-interest groups, perhaps the most innovative of CompuServe's services, are clubs of sorts. Their interests range from specific computer systems to general-interest topics like cooking, music, games, ham-radio operators, literature, and sports. It's likely there's a SIG devoted to one of your interests—CompuServe adds a couple of new ones each month.

And, unlike many clubs, most SIGs aren't exclusive. They are places where people of similar interests gather to share information. They are always changing and each one is a little different from all the others. In fact, they are perhaps the most fluid part of CompuServe. And it's this changing nature of the forums that makes this new form of communication so exciting.

In the next chapter you're going to take an on-line tour of a special-interest group, but first we'd like to tell you some of the things you'll find there.

TALKING TO SIGS— THE MESSAGE BOARD

In nearly all these forums, the most used feature is the message board. It's similar to electronic mail, with an important exception. Usually if you leave a message to someone in a SIG, it may be read by anyone else who visits.

Wait a minute! That sounds slightly sinister. After all, messages are private, aren't they? Well, not in SIGs. At least not ordinarily. And you'll see that's part of the charm of special-interest groups, and the essence of sharing information.

SIGs are places where members can learn about their special interests by reading other people's messages or asking the whole group for help in a public message.

Think of the message section as a big public bulletin board or a question-and-answer section of a magazine. Sometimes the messages are posted for all to read. Sometimes they are posted for an individual but may contain information that is helpful to more than the intended recipient.

When these messages are public, not only does the recipient learn, but all the readers learn.

In general, members can reply to any message left on the board. From this develops a chain of related messages. This is called a "thread," since all messages are all connected by the thread of a single idea.

Example: User A joins the Alphabyte Computer Users' SIG (not a real forum on CompuServe) and leaves a message to all other members asking what word processor he should purchase for his computer.

User B writes a reply recommending one called Crunch-A-Word. User C also leaves a reply to User A's original message saying he thinks a word-processing program called Alpha-Writer is best, then leaves a message to User B saying he once used Crunch-A-Word and found it lacking in speed.

User B responds to User C's criticism saying that he still feels Crunch-A-Word is superior and it has nothing to do with the fact that his brother-in-law, who owes him money, wrote Crunch-A-Word.

This series of messages involves three people. The messages form a thread of a long-distance conversation about one subject. Furthermore, the conversation takes place over a period of time—hours, days, or even a week or two.

If you happened into the Alphabyte SIG, you might find that you had the same question, or at least you were interested in the same topic. You could read all the messages in the thread and get some idea of the pros and cons of various word-processing programs for the Alphabyte computer. Or, if you had your own question about the Alphabyte, it's likely you'd find an answer to your question by leaving it in the form of a message addressed to ALL.

Message boards may be divided into as many as eleven sections to make the message sending and receiving even more specific. For example, the Alphabyte message board might be divided into sections such as Alphabyte News, New User Questions, Alphabyte Programming Tips, etc. As you'll see later, this allows the SIG user to "home in" on a specific topic instead of wading through all the messages on the board.

For immediate real-time on-line discussions, each SIG contains its own version of CB, usually called the "conference area."

Each conference area contains thirty-six channels. All the commands that apply to CB apply to the SIG conference channels. These SIG channels usually aren't used for CB-type conversations, however. They are meant for discussions related to specific SIG topics, although friends who have been brought together by the SIG have been known to "get crazy" on the SIG channels from time to time. Mutually consenting SIGers can do what they please!

Many forums have two kinds of conferences—informal rap sessions and formal guest conferences. In guest conferences, the SIGs often try to follow a structured kind of question-and-answer session. Rather than having all the members "talk" at once, like CB, the conference has a moderator who will recognize questioners one at a time. The SIG will have messages outlining the protocol for guest conferences.

In addition, many SIGs have regular weekly or monthly conferences. There are a couple going on every night of the week somewhere in the system. The topics can range from esoteric computer-related subjects in some SIGs to general interest and on-line parties in others. Charlie's wife, Pamela, hosts an informal weekly conference on women's issues in the National Issues & People SIG (NIPSIG). Dave holds a weekly get-together on gardening and alternative lifestyles issues elsewhere in the system. Other regular conferences deal with politics, puns, and philosophy. Usually, you're quite welcome to drop into these electronic rap sessions. While you tour the system, you should be alert for conference groups on subjects you're interested in.

SIGs also contain databases, similar to Public Access. They generally are filled with a variety of specific information related to the interests of the group. The mythical Alphabyte SIG databases, for

example, might contain public-domain programs specially written for that computer. There could be reprints of articles about the Alphabyte from various magazines. A particularly good thread from the message board on some hot topic may be saved in a database. In fact, the databases could contain anything the sysop wishes to save for long-term reference.

THE SCOOP ON SYSOPS

Sysop? Now, that may be a strange word to you. What, in the name of all that's subtly threatening, is a sysop?

A sysop is the person in charge of a SIG. It stands for "systems operator," and it sounds better than a shortened version of "SIG operator," which would be sigop. Some large SIGs have more than one sysop, incidentally.

In most cases, the sysop is not a CompuServe employee, but an independent contractor who keeps the SIG going. In return, the sysop gets paid a small percentage of the connect-time dollars each user spends while in the SIG. As additional compensation, the sysop may get free time on CompuServe or free time while doing necessary tasks in the SIG.

In other words, if you spend an hour in a SIG, you'd spend \$6, under the current rates. The sysop would get a percentage of that \$6.

That should answer the question: "Will I be welcome in the SIG?"

The sysop is going to make you feel welcome, so long as you're civil. Let's face it. A sysop isn't going to turn down a new member with money to spend.

What kind of special powers does a sysop have that an ordinary user doesn't have? The sysop has a few extra powers (called "wizard" powers), but in the SIG only.

The sysop can delete messages he or she finds to be in poor taste. The sysop can bar unruly members from the SIG. However, these drastic steps happen very rarely and usually only after repeated warnings.

If you join a SIG, what does the sysop know about you? Very little. Not even enough to put you on a junk-mail list.

The sysop knows your user ID, which is common knowledge around the system anyway. The sysop *doesn't* have access to your CompuServe sign-up record, so your address, account number, and how you're paying your bill are not known to the sysop.

The sysop knows when you enter the SIG area but not how long

you stay in the SIG. But that's information available to anyone in the SIG, as you'll see later.

Basically, the sysop has the power to keep the SIG running, to keep it informative, and to keep it on the right track. But the sysop is not an all-knowing seer who keeps files on members' private lives nor a censor who seeks to approve or disapprove all messages.

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

It's easy to see that each SIG is a sort of microcosm of the entire CompuServe network. It has most features of the larger network, but these miniature versions are devoted to specific purposes. They tend to be more personal and sometimes more serious than the casual acquaintances made on CB. Also, most SIGs urge (some even require) members to use real names, rather than CB handles when leaving messages in the SIG.

Unfortunately, many new users say they are afraid to enter a SIG. They feel "threatened." They feel as if they are not welcome, like gate crashers.

These are problems that give sysops gray hair. We hope you'll see that most sysops are happy to have new members and will go out of their way to be helpful to new members.

If, as a new member of a SIG, you act as you would at a party of strangers to which you've been invited, you'll have no problems. And you'll be surprised how quickly you'll be regarded as a friend. If you're intent on making a good impression, you'll make a good impression.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. As long as they are legitimate questions, you won't be considered "dumb" by the sysop or the loyal members of the SIG. Remember, they were once new to CompuServe themselves. They learned by asking questions.

If you have information you think the SIG members would like to have, by all means, leave a message. If you have a legitimate comment in one of the raging debates that often break out in the SIGs, go ahead and comment! No one is stopping you and, in fact, you're encouraged by most sysops to add your two cents (or six dollars, if you want to spend an hour there).

Remember this: There is ongoing communications taking place in these special-interest groups. Unless you join a new SIG within a day or two of the time it is announced, you're joining in the middle of ongoing discussions. You can't expect everything to come to a halt until you catch up. Like any other club, a SIG is dynamic, changing its pattern of messages, information, and conversations.

Most sysops we know bite their tongues when they see a message from a newcomer that reads: "What's this SIG all about?" The intent of the SIG is there for anyone who'll take the time to read the messages and check out the databases. Don't ask the sysop or anyone to give a twenty-line summary of something that changes every day. Instead of asking, explore and find out for yourself.

SOME FINAL QUESTIONS

Where are these SIGs located in the system? Are they in an area that we've already visited?

Well, SIGs are all over the system. There are three broad categories—the Home section SIGs (mostly general-interest topics, ranging from games to space to music), the Personal Computing section SIGs (including groups interested in specific computers, such as the Apple users' group, TRS-80 enthusiasts, Atari users, Commodore owners, and some more general SIGs devoted to programming and software authors), and the Professional SIGs (for lawyers, doctors, aviation, etc.).

Here's a convenience—the starting place for most of CompuServe's SIGs is on page 50. For instance, the menu on HOM-50 is the first page from which you can visit the Home section SIGs. (We'll see how that works in the next chapter.) Similarly, PCS-50 is the starting point for the Personal Computing section SIGs. That's an easy rule to remember for browsing through most of the major SIGs.

Are all SIGs public?

No. Most, but not all. The SIG program, with its sophisticated message boards, databases, and real-time conferences, can be a valuable tool for business, and some firms have private SIGs for their own use. These SIGs do not appear on any menu. Only those who know this unpublished page address in the system can find them and, if you should stumble on to this address by accident, you won't be allowed in unless you're already on the membership logs.

Both of the authors of this book are sysops, but of different kinds of SIGs. Dave is a sysop in a public SIG called "The Good Earth." We'll be visiting it in chapter 11. Charlie, on the other hand, is the sysop of a private SIG set up as a forum for free-lance writers who regularly contribute to *Online Today*, a magazine sponsored by CompuServe. As a "working SIG," its members have access only by invitation of the magazine's editor.

Are all public SIGs free?

Again, most, but not all. In 95 percent of the public forums, your

only charge is the cost of your connect time, the standard \$6 an hour. And in those rare SIGs in which an additional membership fee is charged, you are notified of that before you're invited to join, just as the system outside the SIG informs you of premium services from the outset.

What kind of people become sysops?

All kinds. Many are private citizens who have a great enough interest in the theme of the SIG to devote a portion of their week to running the SIG. In other cases, a company, such as a computer manufacturer or software publisher, might run a public SIG, in which case an employee may be the sysop. In either case, the sysop isn't getting rich on your connect-time dollars. His or her share is small—at best, the income of a minor part-time job. Instead of money, the sysop's motivation more often is similar to the drive in some people to take part in civic work in a community.

We have spent many hours exploring CompuServe SIGs. And we can report that nearly all of them have friendly sysops in charge and friendly members willing to help newcomers with simple or terribly complex problems.

A single issue or single interest has brought people together in this place called a SIG from all over the country. That's an exciting thought in itself. And the result can be an enriching, exciting experience for all.

CHAPTER 11

Getting to the SIG

Enough talk about SIGs. Let's visit one. This chapter will include an on-line tour of the Good Earth SIG on CompuServe's Home Services.

Why the Good Earth SIG? As we mentioned at the end of the last chapter, both Dave and Charlie run SIGs on CompuServe. Dave is sysop of the Good Earth SIG. And frankly, he likes new users to come to his neck of the system.

We hear some of you saying, "Hmm! It's a cheap trick to get me to spend time and money in his SIG!"

Wait. Before you mutiny, consider that it's not a trick if you're told what's going to happen ahead of time.

Besides, we thought that at this point in our travels together, you should know of some of the places in the system you can find us. Dave's SIG is one of them. Also, in the on-line survival kit at the back of the book, we'll include our user ID numbers where you can write us Email if you'd like.

Finally, another reason for visiting Dave's SIG is that we didn't think it would be polite to our fellow sysops to lead our tour group through their homes. We'll use Dave's stomping ground for your first peek at these special on-line neighborhoods. Ol' Dave doesn't mind you tracking up his electronic hallway.

So, what is the Good Earth SIG anyway? It's a SIG devoted to gardening, farming, and alternative life-styles. The members of the SIG have interests ranging from organic gardening and vegetarianism to solar-heating. At least those were the interests when this book was written. Who knows what the topics of interest will be at the time you take your on-line tour?

Maybe you're not interested in vegetarianism or rammed-earth houses or the "secret oath of the sacred tofu." That's okay. You're about to take an educational tour, not commit yourself to a future in farming. You're not going to get trapped in the SIG forever. After you use the Good Earth SIG to learn about SIGs in general, you'll never have to darken its doorway again if you don't want to.

A final word before we forge ahead: As we were writing this book, CompuServe was in the process of making the SIG programs more user friendly than ever before. That means what you see in the SIGs may not be exactly what you see in the book. We've warned you this might happen. But, we've been assured by CompuServe that while the SIG menus might change a bit, the letter commands will remain unchanged. Commands will be added, not taken away. Just follow our letter commands and you'll be OK.

THE FIRST STOP

It's time to crank up the computer and modem and make your phone call to CompuServe.

Log on as you always do and get page CIS-1 (the top page) up on the screen.

Now, you could go directly to the Good Earth SIG by typing G HOM-145. But instead, type G HOM-50. As we told you in the last chapter, many of the SIGs in CompuServe are listed on page 50 (HOM-50, PCS-50, etc.).

When you arrive at HOM-50, you shiould see something like this:

CompuServe	Page HOM-50
GROUPS AND CLUBS	
1 CBers	10 Literary
2 HamNet	11 Educators
3 Netwits	12 Arcade
4 Orch 90	13 Games
5 Sports	14 Family Matters
6 Cooking	15 Good Earth
7 Golf	16 Work-at-Home
8 Space	17 Music
9 Issues	18 Food Buylne
19 Instructions	
20 Descriptions	
Input a number or key <ENTER> for more choices	
!	

This is only a partial list. If you were to press ENTER, you'd see the latest SIGs added to the Home Services section.

Choose 15 from this menu, the number for the Good Earth SIG.

A FEW QUESTIONS: THE SIGN-UP

If you've chosen 15, you'll see:

CompuServe Page HOM-145

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please

Then, depending whether the new program for SIGs has been implemented or not, you'll see either:

Thank You for Waiting
Your name:

Or you'll see an introductory menu like this:

Welcome to Good Earth SIG, V.
3A(74)

New member menu:
1 Purpose
2 Membership Signup
3 Instructions
4 Enter GOOD EARTH SIG

0 Exit

Enter selection:

Let's look at the New Member Menu first. If you choose 1 on this menu, you'll see a brief description of the SIG. No. 3 will give you a long list of commands for use in the SIGs—a help file. Choosing No. 4 will allow you to enter the SIG without becoming a member. Option No. 2 allows you to sign up for membership after you type your name. We'll tell you in a minute why you should choose option No. 2 if you are seeing the New Member Menu.

If you aren't seeing a menu, it's likely all you are seeing is "Your name:". After you type your name, it will ask if you want to become a member of the SIG.

Well, it's time for a decision. You are on the Good Earth SIG doorstep. And you're being asked to sign the register, the way any club might ask visitors to identify themselves.

Remember, we said that SIGs are often more serious than the casual gatherings on CB. If you were joining a serious discussion group, you'd probably want everyone to know your name. Remember this: If you give your name, no one is going to find out your address, telephone number, or blood type through CompuServe. No salesman will call.

What you type in is, of course, up to you. But we would suggest that, in the spirit of the SIG, you enter your name and not the handle you've used in CB. If you don't want to enter your entire name, at least enter your first name. Or your first name and last initial. And some company accounts prefer to enter the name of the company. Charlie's software company, for instance, is a member of a number of SIGs under the name "Saturday Software."

Here are the facts about friendships: In this forum, as in most, there is no membership fee. In all cases, if a SIG does have a membership fee or special qualifications to become a member, the fees or qualifications would be explained before you were asked if you wanted to join. With the Good Earth SIG, there are no sign-up fees. If you sign up now, the next time you come into the SIG you won't be asked your name again. Since there is no fee, no obligation, and no initiation rites, why not sign up? At least for this tour, type Y to become a member. Incidentally, if you choose not to become a member of a SIG, you may not have access to all the forum's features.

After you've said yes, the system may say:

Inserting name and ID;
please stand by.....

Depending on how many members the SIG has, this process of enrolling you could take from a few seconds to a minute or more. Then you'll see a "Welcome" message from the sysop, followed by the name you gave at the door with your own ID number.

You'll be shown when you were last on the SIG and, since you've never been here before, you'll be shown the current date and time.

Next, you'll see "High msg #:0". That means you haven't read any of the messages on the SIG, since you are new here.

Next, you'll see what user number you are. Every time someone checks into the SIG, the user-number counter increases by one. You bumped it up one yourself when you logged in to the SIG.

The next piece of business you'll see is a message about the lowest message number and the highest message number in the SIG. All

messages from day one aren't saved. Most SIGs hold 256 messages or thereabouts. As the newest is posted, the oldest disappears. Some SIGs contain two or three times as many, depending on the SIG usage.

Now comes a "Brief bulletin." This is a special area where the sysop can post messages of importance to SIG members. Sometimes it directs member attention to a message or a series of messages. Sometimes it lists new files on the SIG databases. Sometimes it announces upcoming SIG conferences. No one but the sysop can change the message and every time the message is changed, every member or SIG user who has seen it before will see it again.

In other words, each change in the bulletin resets the bulletin so that each person coming into the SIG will see it in its revised form. The bulletin won't display automatically again until the sysop changes it, which could be the next day or the next week.

At the end of the brief bulletin, you'll be asked to ENTER a blank line to continue.

THE FUNCTION MENU: HOME BASE

After you've tapped the ENTER key, you'll be shown the main SIG menu, called the Function menu, which is the same in most SIGs, something like this:

```
The Good Earth SIG
Function menu:
1 (L) Leave a message
2 (R) Read messages
3 (RN) Read new messages
4 (RM) Read waiting messages
5 (B) Read bulletins
6 (CO) Online conference

9 (OP) Change your SIG options
0 (E) Exit from this SIG
```

Enter selection or H for help:

This is your main menu in a SIG, just as CIS-1 is the main menu for the entire system. As we've suggested, in a sense these forums are a microcosm of the system as a whole. For the SIGs, this menu is your home base, from which you'll enter most of your important commands.

Incidentally, if you become a regular SIG hopper, you'll probably get tired of this time-consuming, repetitious menu. Well, there is a way for members to "turn off" the menu and travel in the express

lane, called expert mode. In a few more chapters we'll show you how to do that. But for now, let's use the menus for what they're meant to do—help you.

On this tour, our major concern is going to be selection 2 from this menu which is "Read messages." To save time on this tour, type 2. At this point, you'll be told again the number range of the messages on the board, from the lowest number to the highest number. Then you'll see a message like this:

```
System contains messages
3305 to 3607
Starting message number:
```

The system is asking at what message number you want to start reading. Choose one of the lower numbers in the message range and enter it at the colon prompt.

It's possible that you could get a message saying there is no message by that number, despite the fact it falls within the stated range. That means the message may have been deleted.

If you get such a message, choose another number in the series and try again until a message comes up. When you get a message, it should look something like this:

```
#: 3333 Sec. 0 - General Interest
Sb: #ORCHIDS
    08-Jan-84 19:03:03
Fm: Dave 70000,2426
To: Charlie 70000,11
```

```
Orchids are Epiphytes- 'air
Plants' that get their nourishment
from bird droppings washed by rain
into the root system. . . .
```

The first line of the message will give its number and the section of the message board where it is located.

The second line will be its subject. If a number precedes the subject or title, that means the message you are reading is a reply to a previous message.

The next line gives the date and time the message was posted.

The next line preceded by "FM:" is the name and user ID of the sender.

The next line preceded by "TO:" is the person to whom the message is sent. In most instances, that person's user ID is displayed as well.

Then comes the message, which may be one line long or perhaps thirty lines long or even longer.

Next comes yet another kind of menu. This one is called the Read Option menu.

```
1 (C) Read next message  
2 (RE) Reply to current message  
3 (T) Return to Function menu
```

Enter selection or H for help:

There's a possibility your Read Option menu may not look like this one. Option No. 1 may be "(UA) User Address." If that's the case, don't despair. The command of C for "Read Next Message" will still work at the prompt. If the user option has changed, just make sure you type a C instead of 1.

The system is asking what you want to do next. With these options, you can read the next highest public message, reply to the message that just displayed on your screen, or go back to the Function menu. This time, type 1 or C and see the next message to get an idea of how this Read Option menu works on its simplest level.

If you keep choosing "1 (C) Read next message," you'll eventually come to a message that will conclude with "There is a reply:" and list a number. That means someone has replied to the message you just chose. If you'd like, you can use one of the more advanced commands to read the reply. Instead of typing a 1 at the Read Option menu, type *RR* for Read Reply.

Instead of going to the next highest message, the reply will be presented on the screen. If it says "*** More ***" at the bottom of the reply, that means there's yet another reply. Another *RR* entered at the Read Option menu prompt will get you the second reply and so on until replies run out. When they do, type another 1 or C to see the message that numerically follows the last reply. We told you about threads in the last chapter. You've just read a portion of a thread. There are faster ways to read threads and we'll discuss them later.

And don't worry if you don't understand the *RR* command. For the time being, just keep in mind that there are more command options available to you than those displayed on the menus. Most of these additional commands are one or two letters rather than digits. We'll be talking about them in more detail in the next two chapters.

Well, you've seen the basic steps to reading messages on the Good Earth SIG board. It's basically the same in every SIG you'll find on CompuServe.

Now choose 3 from the Read Option menu.

```
1 (C) Read next message  
2 (RE) Reply to current message  
3 (T) Return to Function menu
```

```
Enter selection or H for help: 3
```

You will return to the Function menu.

```
The Good Earth SIG  
Function menu:
```

```
1 (L) Leave a message  
2 (R) Read messages  
3 (RN) Read new messages  
4 (RM) Read waiting messages  
5 (B) Read bulletins  
6 (CO) Online conference  
  
9 (OP) Change your SIG options  
0 (E) Exit from this SIG
```

```
Enter selection or H for help:
```

HELPFUL LISTS

Once you're back at the Function prompt, get ready for some information overload. As with most areas of CompuServc, there's help with all the SIG commands located at this Function menu prompt. In a moment, we want you to type 1 (for information) and press ENTER. When you do, you're going to see a short course in how to make full use of SIG commands.

Ready?

Okay, do it now and rejoin the book after it ends.

Wow! Did you get all that? Are you ready for a test? Everything you need to know to make efficient use of every SIG on CompuServe is located in that file. But . . .

Here's a secret. Don't try to memorize these commands. The more you use the SIGs, the more you'll need some of these special options, many of which are explained in the next chapter. And when you need them, you can search them out, ask others for help, download these commands to your printer (if you have the capability to do that), or order a SIG manual from CompuServe where the words remain stationary on a page instead of jumping all over a screen. And, of course, we'll be showing you the major commands in the next few chapters.

There's one other piece of magic you ought to see before you log off.

From the Function menu prompt, type *U* and read carefully what you see. Do that now. You should see something like this:

```
Enter control-P to stop

Charlie Bowen 75725,1331
07-Jan-84 19:30:17

DAVID SMITH 70000,100
07-Jan-84 17:45:28

SysOp Dave Peyton 76703,244
07-Jan-84 15:12:49

Harry Jones 70000,000
07-Jan-84 09:56:40

SARAH 70000,101
07-Jan-84 09:12:54
```

Did you see your name and user ID? Every time someone comes into the SIG, the visit is recorded on this user log. It gives a name, a user ID, and the time the user entered the SIG. Everyone who wants to can see it. There's nothing secret about it. The sysops use it a lot to see who has been around to make a visit. But you can use it, too, if you want to see who has been in the SIG recently or who might be in the SIG at the same time you are there.

As the message says, to stop the scroll, enter a CONTROL P.

```
SysOp Dave Peyton 76703,244
07-Jan-84 15:12:49
SARAH 70000,341
```

^P

And you're back to the Function menu.

It's now time to log off. You can do it directly from the SIG to save time and money. Simply type OFF or BYE. First, you'll see the exit message as you leave the SIG, giving you the highest message you retrieved and a thank you for visiting the SIG.

Next, you'll see the familiar signs that you are leaving CompuServe.

A BACKWARD GLANCE

Now that the meter isn't running, let's discuss the Function menu you saw in the SIG. Remember, it looked like this:

```
Function menu:  
1 (L) Leave a message  
2 (R) Read messages  
3 (RN) Read new messages  
4 (RM) Read waiting messages  
5 (B) Read bulletins  
6 (CO) Online conference  
  
9 (OP) Change your SIG options  
0 (E) Exit from this SIG
```

Enter selection or H for Help:

Each number is followed by a one- or two-letter code. The numbers are interchangeable with the letters in all options on the function menu except number 2 which is Read Messages. If you type R and ENTER instead of 2 and ENTER, you'll get the mystifying Subcommand prompt. At this point, you shouldn't worry yourself with what this means, so type the 2 and ENTER instead of the R and ENTER. When you choose the 2, you'll be shown the range of message numbers and you can choose any number within that range.

With the other selections from the menu, choose either the number or the letter, whatever is more comfortable for you. However, we do suggest that you try to get into the habit of thinking letter commands. When we get into the higher-level commands, they will make use of the letters not digits.

Function 1 (L) is what you would choose if you wanted to leave a message to someone. How you leave a message will be discussed in the next chapter.

If you choose function 3 (RN), you will be shown the new messages that were posted since you were last on the SIG.

If someone had written a message to you using your user ID, it would be marked for your attention the next time you came into the SIG. And before you saw the Function menu, you'd see a note saying "You Have a Message Waiting." To read it from the Function menu, you would simply choose function 4 (RM) to read waiting messages. The RM stands for Read Marked messages.

If you chose function 5 (B), you would get to read the brief bulletin at the SIG's doorway. In addition, many sysops leave longer

bulletins in another bulletin area. When you select 5 or B, you get to read them both. To stop scrolling either of them, a CONTROL P will bring you back to the mcnu.

Function 6 (CO) takes you to the conference area. New users are generally taken to channel 30. From that channel, you can use CB navigation commands to get to other channels. For instance, as in CB, /TUN 5 would take you to channel 5. /MON 2 would allow you to monitor channel 2.

Function 9 (OP) allows you to tailor the way you move about in the SIG and display SIG output to your screen. Remember we talked about Defalt which is available for the entire system? Think of this as a way of setting defaults in a SIG. But don't concern yourself with this until you become familiar with the SIG program. We'll go into detail on this in chapter 13.

And finally, function 0 (E) will take you out of the SIG and back to a menu. In the case of the Good Earth SIG, you'd be taken back to HOM-50 where all the Home Services section SIGs are listed.

The other menu we saw was the Read Option menu. It looked like this:

1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu

Remember, you'll see this Read Option menu only after you have read a message. It gives you the options you need to proceed. Typing a C or a 1 will allow you to read the next message in the sequence. An RE or 2 will allow you to reply to the last message you read. And a T or a 3 will get you out of the Read Option menu and back to the "top," or in this case, the trusty Function menu.

KEEPING CONTROL

One more item before we call it a night—this time about CONTROL codes.

As you've seen, the CONTROL P has a special function in the SIGs: You can use it to interrupt a user-log scroll and return to the Function menu. You also can use a CONTROL P to interrupt bulletins, files in the database, and messages on the bulletin board. Think of CONTROL P in the SIGs as saying, "Okay, okay, let's get on with it!"

And, remember CONTROL C, the great bailout command? CONTROL C is particularly useful in a SIG. It tells the system to

stop what it's doing because you've changed your mind. It only has to be used sparingly, since the menus usually give you handy exit options, but it's nice to know it's there in emergencies.

Suppose, for instance, on our tour you had made a mistake and selected option 1 (Leave a message) instead of option 2 (Read messages). That would be a mess, since we haven't talked about leaving messages yet. CONTROL C gets you out of fixes like that.

After a CONTROL C, you'll see a menu like this:

```
^C  
Control-C intercepted; options:  
1 continue  
2 exit  
3 logoff  
4 return to command level  
Option:
```

Option 4 would return you to the Function menu. Option 1 allows you to continue (that is, ignore the CONTROL C and go ahead), option 2 exits the SIG, and option 3 logs you off the system.

CHAPTER 12

More about SIGs and Messages

If you've had time to reflect on what you saw in the last chapter, you've probably considered by now the enormous potential of the SIG programs. They're little communities unto themselves. It's not by chance that some of their conferences seem like old-fashioned town hall meetings.

Some SIGs have thousands of members and so much activity that they fill up a 256-message board in an evening. Others are quiet, esoteric little corners of the system where the membership, though small, is fiercely loyal. With such diversity, it's little wonder that some CompuServe subscribers find the SIGs the most appealing part of the system and spend most of their time there.

In this chapter, without actually going on-line, we'd like to take a closer look at the SIGs and begin exploring some of the more powerful commands.

When you were on-line in the last chapter, we asked you to read a few messages on the boards to get a feel for how the message boards are organized. The messages are placed on the boards sequentially, regardless of the subject or the section on which it is placed. We told you that there are more commands available than are listed on the Function menu and that in time we would show you some more efficient ways to read messages. That's a promise whose time has come.

SEARCHING THE MESSAGE BOARD

One of the most powerful features of computers is their ability to search a large collection of words or numbers for a specific selection. CompuServe employs many powerful search options. You saw some

of them in Public Access, in the weather forecasts, and Index areas earlier when you searched the database for specific keywords. In the SIGs, you can also search the message board for specific topics or authors. The command is "Read Selectively," or RS.

Suppose, for instance, that you are in a SIG and you wanted to read all the messages posted by your friend Dave Jones. At the Function menu, you could enter the RS command, like this:

```
Function menu:  
1 (L) Leave a message  
2 (R) Read messages  
3 (RN) Read new messages  
  
5 (B) Read bulletins  
6 (CO) Online conference  
  
9 (OP) Change your SIG options  
0 (E) Exit from this SIG
```

Enter selection or H for help: RS

CompuServe would then display this message "Search field:"; what it's looking for is an F, T, or S—that is, "From," "To," or "Subject." You can search for any of the three. In this example, we would choose F, since we'll be looking for messages *from* Dave Jones.

Now the system asks "Search string." In other words, what word shall we search for. Here we should enter the whole name, "Dave Jones," but for the purposes of this illustration, suppose we entered just "Dave" (without quotation marks).

Finally, the system will report something like this:

```
System contains messages  
2651 to 2982  
Starting message number  
(N implies since last time on):
```

It wants to know at what message to start searching. If you wanted to start the search from the oldest message, you could enter 2651 (or simply 0—the system will assume 0 means start with the earliest existing message). If you wanted to search only the new messages (i.e., those posted after the last one you read on your last visit), you could enter N (for new).

After you've defined these three options, CompuServe will search the message board and collect all of the messages it finds that meet the specifications you outlined—from Dave, forward from the num-

ber you specified—and will display the first one for you, something like this:

```
#: 2710 Sec. 1-General Interest
Sb: #2692-TROPICAL PLANT SIG
     18-Jan-84 12:06:22
Fm: SysOp Dave Peyton 76703,244
To: BOB L. 70002,001 (X)
```

Bob: There isn't a tropical plant SIG and I doubt if there is one in the works at this time. However, you might keep "fishing" on this SIG since we have people interested in all kinds of plants and you might run into someone here who likes to grow tropical plants.

Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu

Enter selection or H for help:

In this case, the first message the system has located is number 2710, and note that it meets the criteria we specified—it's *from* a person name "Dave," in this case, Sysop Dave. In other words, the system has searched the From field of every message on the board and collected for you all that contain the word "Dave" in that field. Obviously, if we had wanted to see only messages from "Dave Jones," we should have entered the full name in the search string. (Again, *without* the quotation marks. If you used quotation marks in the search string, CompuServe would consider it part of the field you're looking for.)

We could also have found this message if we had selected the S (for subject) option under the RS command and searched for "tropical," "plant," or "SIG." Get the idea? In computer terms, this is sometimes called a "string search"—it locates any messages that have a portion of the word you specify in either the To, From, or Subject field.

At the bottom of the message is the Read Option menu that we saw in the last chapter. Since we're in the middle of a search of the board, selecting option 1 (Read next message) at this point will give us the next message from "Dave," in this case, message 2731.

#: 2731 Sec. 0 - News
Sb: #2701-NEW MEMBER
18-Jan-84 12:09:48
Fm: Dave Jones, 70000,010
To: Nancy 70000,1111 (X)

Hi Nancy. Welcome aboard. This is kind of the slow season for new books right now, but very soon, I'll be reviewing some on the SIG. I believe I may have a book about trees and shrubs somewhere in my library. I'll look, and if I can find the name I'll send it along to you.

Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu

This message also meets our specifications for the search (it's from a "Dave"), but it's a different Dave—Dave Jones.

But more importantly, notice that there's a number in the Subject field of this message—#2701. What that means is that Dave Jones's message was posted as a reply to Nancy's original message (2701).

And while we're here, let's take a closer look at that Read Option menu. On the first line there's a C in parentheses. That means that to read the next message from "Dave," you can either enter 1 or C (for continue). As we've said, all of the numeric commands can be entered as letters—2 can be entered as RE for REply and 3 can be T for Top (that is, top of the SIG, or the Function menu).

Remember, it would be a good idea as you prowl the SIGs to notice these letters. Eventually you may want to start using the "expert mode" of the SIG and not depend on the time-consuming menu. When you do, you'll use the letter commands rather than numbers. You can speed yourself along the way by becoming familiar with the letters and their meanings now. But more about all that in the next chapter.

If you wanted to read the message that prompted Dave Jones's reply, you could return to the Function menu (with a T or a 3). At the bottom of the Function menu, you could enter RI 2701. Oops—a new command. RI simply means, "Read Individually," and you can put the message number, 2701, right in there with it. It's another of those slick two-letter commands that aren't on the menu, but certainly can speed you along.

Returning to the Function menu causes the system to end the search you had going with the *RS* command (for messages from Dave), and the RI 2701 would cause only that message to be displayed.

But there are even better ways to read related messages. Read on.

READING THE THREADS OF THE CONVERSATIONS

Obviously, looking at messages the way we've been doing it so far—sequentially, or even by selected fields—makes for some pretty disjointed reading. You can't tell who's replying to whom and it's easy to forget points, issues, and questions raised in earlier messages.

Fortunately, CompuServe has already addressed this problem for us—reading threads.

You recall, no doubt, from the last chapter that a thread is simply an original message and its family of replies. Every time someone replies to a message, the system makes a note of it. You have an option to read messages in groups of replies and responses, using the commands *RR* (for Read Reply which you met in the last chapter) and *RP* (for Read Previous Message). These commands (and the Read Thread command that we'll talk about in a minute) bring real continuity to the message boards.

Let's see how they work. Suppose you found this message on the board:

```
#: 2713      Sec. 2 - Horticulture
Sb: #2712-#SWEDISH IVY
     18-Jan-84 12:12:07
Fm: SysOp Dave Peyton 76703,244
To: SUSAN 70000,2222 (X)
```

```
Susan. I have forwarded your
message to Sysop Ted, who gets on
the SIG once a week about mid-week.
Look for the reply sometime after
Wednesday.
```

```
***There is a reply:
2739
```

```
Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu
```

```
Enter selection or H for help:
```

From what we've found so far, you know that the number in the Subject line (#2712) means that this message is in reply to message 2712. And you know that you could return to the Function menu and RI 2712 (Read Individually message number 2712), but that's a lot of trouble. Instead, at the bottom of the Read Options menu, you could simply enter *RP*. This command means, "Read the Previous message—the one to which this is a reply," and, in this case, the system would respond with:

```
# : 2712 Sec. 2 - Horticulture
Sb: #SWEDISH IVY
     18-Jan-84 08:39:42
Fm: SUSAN 70000,2222
To: 76703,252 (X)

QN:CAN SWEDISH IVY GROW IN DIM
LIGHT? QN: WHY DO ITS STALKS
SHRIVEL? THANK YOU.

***There are replies:
2713, 2764

Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu

Enter selection or H for help:
```

Similarly, with our original message (2713), we've received a note that 2739 is a reply. An *RR* (for Read Reply) command at the Read Options menu would immediately display message number 2739—much faster than returning to the Function menu and RI 2739. *RR* and *RP* save you time by taking advantage of the thread structure of the SIGs.

Reading messages by their threads is a good way to enjoy the message boards of the SIGs, because it gives you a sense of the "conversation." Some of the better sysops have found the threads feature of SIGs so valuable that they have invited guest "speakers" into their forums for a month-long question-and-answer session with members. The transcripts of these threads often are preserved in the SIG's databases.

One of the most powerful Read commands available in the SIGs is *RT*—Read Thread. If you enter it at the bottom of a message on a board, the system will collect all the messages in a particular thread and display them for you one by one, starting at the top, i.e., the

earliest message in the conversation. (Remember that there is a limit to the number of messages on a SIG board—usually 256 messages—and the oldest messages are always scrolling off the board as new ones are placed. Therefore, if the thread is an old one, the original message that prompted the conversation may have already scrolled off. In that case, *RT* will give you the oldest message in the conversation that's still on the board.)

Perhaps this little diagram will help you understand how threads work.

```
2916: LOG CABINS Sec. 4-Nature's Way
      To: ANYONE
      Fm: VIKKI
> 2917: Jerry
>> 2918: VIKKI
>>> 2926: Jerry
>>>> 2931: VIKKI
>>>>> 2940: Jerry
>>>>> 2942: VIKKI
>>>>> 2943: VIKKI
>>>>> 2944: Jerry
>>>>> 2946: VIKKI
>>>>> 2977: Dagny
>>> 2982: George
> 2922: Edward
>> 2925: Jerry
```

Suppose that VIKKI posted a message about log cabins, leaving it for Anyone.

As you can see here, Jerry responded to that original message, and thereafter, he and VIKKI carried on a conversation on the board, with each new message a reply to a previous one.

This particular thread has three branches, like a tree. The main branch (that is, the longest one) is the conversation between VIKKI and Jerry. However, other subscribers also get into the discussion. Note that Dagny jumped in and drew a reply from George, and Edward had a comment and he received a reply from Jerry.

The power of the *RT* (Read Thread) command is obvious when you realize that at any point in a thread—that is, at any of the above message numbers—if you enter an *RT* command, the system will collect all the messages in the thread, display the first one, and lead you through every reply in the order they were given, no matter where they are numerically on the board.

Suppose you came across this message and it piqued your curiosity, since you also are interested in log cabins.

#: 2940 Sec. 4 - Nature's Way
Sb: #2931-#LOG CABINS
05-Jan-84 16:22:37
Fm: Jerry 70000,007
To: VIKKI 70000,001 (X)

Ok, will do. I'm sure everybody
you know, likes you as you are,
Vikki! I do!!!!

***There are replies:
2942, 2943

Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) (etc.)

You now know that entering the *RT* command at the prompt on the last line will cause the system to collect all the messages in the thread (all of them in the above diagram) and display them for you one by one, starting with the top messages, in this case:

#: 2916 Sec. 4 - Nature's Way
Sb: #LOG CABINS
03-Jan-84 20:44:22
Fm: VIKKI 70000,001
To: ANYONE

IS ANYONE OUT THERE FAMILIAR WITH
LOG CABINS? I AM INTERESTED IN
BUILDING ONE FROM NORTHERN LOGS.
ARE THEY A GOOD FORM OF INSULATION?
ALSO, WHAT ABOUT SOLAR ENERGY. ANY
INFO. ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE
GREATLY APPRECIATED. VIKKI

***There is a reply:
2917

Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu

Enter selection or H for help:

Now a C or a 1 entered at the Read Option menu will show you the next message in the thread.

#: 2917 Sec. 4 - Nature's Way
Sb: #2916-#LOG CABINS
03-Jan-84 22:00:01
Fm: Jerry 70000,007
To: VIKKI 70000,001 (X)

Vikki,

I'm no expert, but I don't
think a log cabin is going to get
it up there where you live. Dry
wood is a fair insulator. . .

Hey, that's a powerful command. If in our diagram about log cabins, you had read message 2982 and wanted to see the entire discussion, an *RT* at the Read Option prompt would take you to the very top of the thread, or at least the oldest message in the thread still on the board. In this case, that would be message 2916.

Also, you can stop reading the thread at any point. Entering *T* (or option 3) would take you back to the Function menu.

WRITING MESSAGES ON THE BOARD

Writing messages on the SIG bulletin boards is easier than using Email or the National Bulletin Board because you have a menu to guide you all the way.

As the instructions on the Function menu suggest, option 1 gives you a chance to write a message on the board. You may type "All" if you're addressing the entire membership. If you want to address a message to a specific member, remember to include the member's user ID number after his or her name. Then the next time the intended recipient logs in to the SIG, the system will notify that person that he or she has a "marked" message waiting.

Also, you can write to "Sysop" and the message will be marked for the systems operator.

After that, the system will prompt you for the topic of your message by displaying "Subject." This can be a word or string of words, up to twenty-four characters.

Now you're ready to write your message. The system will display:

Enter your message. Use a blank
line or control-Z to end message.

It will show the number of the line you are on as you go. There is a limit to the length of your message (about forty-five lines on a sixty-four-character screen), and the system will notify you if you exceed it. Remember to use the ENTER key at the end of each line as you do in Email or on the National Bulletin Board. For instance:

```
1:  
Harry, <ENTER>  
2:  
    Sorry I missed the conference  
    last <ENTER>  
3:  
    night. I didn't realize until it  
    was too late <ENTER>  
4:  
    that I would have to stay late at  
    the office. <ENTER>
```

When you've finished, just enter a blank line and the system will show you a new menu, this one a list of "Leave" options, like this:

```
Leave options:  
1 (S) Store the message  
2 (L) List the message  
3 (R) Replace a line  
4 (D) Delete a line  
5 (C) Continue entering text  
6 (A) Abort the Leave function  
  
Enter selection or H for help:
```

All of these options are fairly straightforward. For instance, option 2 (or L) will list the entire message, with the line numbers so you can take another look before storing it. Or you can list a portion of the message. L 1:10, for example, would list the first ten lines of a message. Note the colon (:) instead of a hyphen here.

This is a "line-oriented" text editor, so if you decide to delete a line, you must do so by line number. If you selected 4 (D), CompuServe asks you for the line you wish to delete. Option 3 (R) will ask you the number of the line you want to replace, then display the current line and ask you to type in the replacement.

After you've edited the message as you want it, option 1 (S) will store the message on the board. Selecting S from the Leave Option menu will usually cause the system to respond with something like this:

```
Section # required
0 - General Interest
1 - Homesteading
2 - Horticulture
3 - HELP!
4 - Nature's Way
5 - Folkways
```

Enter selection:

What CompuServe is asking for is the number of the section on which you want your message displayed. Most SIGs have divided the message board up into more than one section, sort of like individual bulletin boards within the forum.

After you've specified the section, CompuServe will report that the message is stored, with a notice something like "Message # 3004 Stored" and then will return you to the Function menu.

All of that deals with posting an original message (or starting a thread, as it were). Replying to messages is even easier. As you recall, when you're reading messages, each message you read is followed by a menu like this one:

```
Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu
```

Enter selection or H for help:

If you selected option 2 or just typed RE, the system would let you type in your reply. This time you don't have to worry about addressing it—the system will do that for you. It automatically addresses your message to the author of the message to which you're replying.

If you use RE, however, your message will become part of the message thread you have been reading. Perhaps you might want to send a note to the sender of the message you just read, but you don't want it to become part of the thread. In that case, you would use the UA command, which automatically addresses your message to the author of the previous message but gives you the option of putting a new subject heading on your note, thereby taking it out of the thread you have been reading.

A LITTLE PRIVACY

Most messages can be read by all members of the SIG, but every once in a while, you may want a message to be invisible to the general public and only readable by you and the intended recipient. Many SIGs provide an option for private messages (sometimes called "Pmail").

Private messages are composed exactly like regular ones but are stored slightly differently. At the Leave message, instead of selecting 1 or S, you must type SP followed by the section on which you wish the private message to be posted. For example, SP 0 would place the private message on section 0.

Remember, any private messages must contain the recipient's user ID number in the "To" field.

To the recipient of Pmail, the message will look like any other, except that a (P) will be adjacent to the message number, something like this:

```
3234 (P) Sec. 0 - General Interest
Sb: Conference
      30-Jan-84 18:09:34
Fm: Charlieb 71635,1025
To: Dave 76703,244
      Dave, think you can meet me
      tonight at 10:30 for a chat?
```

The (P) after the message number 3234 means that it is readable by Charlieb and Dave—in fact, only they will know the message exists.

If you want to leave a private message for the sysop, there's even a faster way—just address the message to *SYSOP. When you are asked "To:", replying "*SYSOP" will cause the message to be visible only to the sysop.

When should you use Pmail? Well, that's up to you. Most sysops ask you to correspond privately with someone when the subject would be of no interest to other members of the SIG. Some members get quite angry when their connect-time dollars are taken up with messages about your Aunt Wanda and her cat. If you think your message will be of interest only to the recipient, do everyone a favor and consider Pmail. Better yet, leave them Email.

SOME HOMEWORK

In this chapter we've covered commands that are important to your full enjoyment of SIGs. Unfortunately, because of the nature of the commands, we couldn't take you on-line to explore them (since we would all be looking at different messages and threads, and that would make examples difficult indeed).

To make up for this, we'd like you to take a break before starting the next chapter and review what you've learned in this one. Then go on-line on your own to stretch your new wings a little.

For instance, how about going back to the Good Earth SIG (HOM-145) and, using the *RS* command, read some of the messages addressed to "All."

Also, look for a message to which you can send a brief reply, or at least send a message to the sysop introducing yourself. (Most sysops appreciate a brief message from new members. And if you send Dave a private message saying you bought his book, it'll brighten his day!)

Find a thread and read it with the *RT* command.

If you get a chance, find another SIG and explore it. (The Index program lists them all, and we have a partial list in the On-line Survival Kit in the back of the book.) You'll find that the commands are virtually the same in each SIG. And remember the handy GO command that will put you on the express to another feature in the system. In the SIGs, you can use the GO command at the bottom of the Function menu. For example, G PCS-117 at the Function menu in the Good Earth SIG would allow you to exit Good Earth and log in to the Software & Authors SIG, which happens to be all the way over in the Personal Computing section on page 117. Love that GO command!

SIG CONFERENCING—A NIFTY ADDITION TO CB

We haven't spent much time on the conference commands in SIGs, because they are virtually the same as those used in CB. In the tour in the last chapter, we showed you the "doorway" to the SIG conference rooms, Option 6 on the Function menu will take you to conference. Or you can simply type CO at the bottom on the Function menu for the same effect.

While you're on your field trip, you might see if there's anyone in the SIG at the same time you are and invite him or her to chat in conference for a few minutes with you.

Wait a minute. How do you do that? How can you tell if there's another subscriber visiting a SIG at the same time you are?

Well, we're glad you asked us that. . . .

Remember the USTAT command you used in CB to get a list of other users on the channels? Well, the same command is available in SIGs. At the bottom of a Function menu, you can enter UST, and the system will print out on your screen a list of who's currently in the SIG. A typical UST in a SIG might look like this:

Job	User ID	Node	Prgm.
22	70000,777	T06FYL	SIG
34	70000,1153	T03TSB	SIG
36	70007,411	T16QCC	SIG
41	70000,105	T06LIS	SIG
46	70000,1007	T01GBN	SIG
51	70000,1205	T09NYF	SIG
53	70000,1571	T11QCD	ACCESS
54	70000,442	T08CSG	SIG
76	70000,443	T08DCE	ACCESS

It looks pretty much like the /USTATs in CB, including the job numbers and nodes of individual subscribers. Most of the time, USTATs in SIGs are much shorter than those in CB. Sometimes yours will be the only name on the list, meaning you're the only person kicking around in that particular SIG at that particular time.

However, if you do see another user ID on the list (and you're feeling outgoing), you can say hello by using a new command called SEN (that is, SENd). Here's how it works:

On the UST list, you saw the job numbers of the various visitors. Suppose in the example above, you wanted to say howdy to job 22. From the Function menu you could enter SEN Job 22 Hi there! I'm new here.

The SEN command would send the message to job 22. No matter what the other visitor was doing at the moment—reading messages, writing messages, etc.—he or she would see on the screen something like the following:

;;COM64:-Job 54: Hi there! I'm new.

With, of course, your job number preceding it instead of 54. If the other subscriber wanted to reply, he would simply go to the Function menu and type something like:

SEN Job 54 Welcome aboard! Time for
a short chat on CO?

And that message would appear on your screen.

Now that we've told you how to SEN a message, we're going to urge you not to do it. No, actually, we're going to suggest that you use the command very sparingly. Here's why:

Some visitors in SIGs get annoyed by being regularly interrupted by SEN messages. Face it—everyone in a SIG is doing *something*—reading the board, writing a message, perusing the bulletin. No one comes to a SIG and sits patiently at the Function menu, waiting for SEN messages to come in.

SEN is best used as either a quick "hi" to a friend in a message that doesn't require a reply, or as an invitation to drop into the SIG's regular conference (CO) area for a chat.

If you ever SEND a message and don't get a reply, it could mean that the other fellow hasn't learned this command yet. Or, more likely, he's in the middle of writing a message on the board. If he was to stop to answer your SEN message immediately, he'd have to cut his message short (or abort it altogether) in order to get back to the Function menu, since that's where SEN can be used.

Therefore, in this SIG society, it is *not* considered impolite if SEN messages sometimes go unanswered.

On your SIG field trip, if you want to get an idea of how SEN works without disturbing a stranger, you can SEND to yourself. Simply enter the UST command from the Function menu and notice your own job number. Then (again, at the all-powerful Function menu), enter SEN followed by *Job* and your job number, then the message. In a few seconds, that message should come bouncing back to you.

And if that's your idea of a good time, then you probably can stop your CompuServe research right now. But if you think your mother had more in mind for you than talking to yourself electronically via Columbus, Ohio, at \$6 an hour, check back with us after your field trip. In the next chapter we'll look at some more of the advanced SIG commands, including ways to scan the message boards quickly, and a way to save time in the SIGs.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we found out about these commands:

—RS, meaning Read Selectively, is a SIG command issued from the Function menu to search for a specific group of messages. Issuing

the command will cause the system to ask which "field" you wish to search (To, From, or Subject) and what "string" you wish to search.

—RT, Read Thread, allows you to read a specific group of messages and replies around a certain topic.

—RR, Read Reply, displays the reply to a message.

—RP, Read Previous, displays the previous message that prompted the message you're looking at.

—RI, Read Individually, is a command from the Function menu that displays a specific message.

—SP, Store Privately, issued from the Leave Option menu, followed by a section number, stores a message privately for another SIG member.

—UST gives you a list of people who are in a SIG at the same time you are, including job numbers and nodes.

—UA from the Read Option menu allows you to respond to the sender of the previous message automatically without entering his or her name and user ID and without adding your message to the current thread.

—SEN allows you to send a message to another user who is somewhere in the SIG. Entered from the Function menu, the syntax is SEN Job ## (message).

More about SIGs: Graduate School

Have you ever noticed in most tutorial books that just before the end, the authors take off the gloves and start giving you the advanced material with little or no sugar coating? We've come to that point.

Well, it's not that bad, actually. We're not going to throw you in and abandon you. But we are going to be covering an awful lot of material in this chapter, our last on-line tour of a SIG.

As always, since we're spending your money, not ours, we're going to try to see as many different features as we can in the shortest possible connect time. And, of course, we're not trying to show you every feature on the system; we want to show you the secret of navigating the system on your own.

Now, honestly, you're probably not ready to employ some of the features we'll see tonight. For instance, we want to show you the area of the SIG that lets you "turn off" the Function menu and run the program in expert mode. Now, since you've just started looking into these forums, we doubt that you're ready to be an expert. The menus probably still seem quite acceptable. Still, in keeping with our goal of helping you customize CompuServe to your own liking, we want you to know where these high-level features are so you can use them when you decide the time is right. (Stick together and nobody will get hurt. . . .)

Of course, some of the other commands we'll be looking at this time you'll be able to use right away. For instance, we'll show you how to quickly scan the message boards and databases.

If you become a regular SIG hopper (and we hope you do), you should develop a comfortable routine to glean out the material you're interested in. In the last chapter we told you how to use the

SIGs' major tools in this area—the commands for Read Thread, Read Selectively, Read New Messages, etc.

But there are also some valuable commands that allow you to scan the message boards without having to read all the messages. For example, perhaps you'll find several SIGs you want to check into regularly. Your routine might be to buzz into each SIG and quickly scan the subjects of all the messages, marking all the new ones that look interesting to be read later.

Or, you may find that a SIG has one portion of its message board that's interesting to you and you want to read only messages left on that part of the board. For instance, the Game SIG used to have a section set aside for chess. If that is your primary interest in the Game SIG, you could direct the system to "default" to that section—that is, show you only the chess section messages, unless you specified otherwise.

You're probably beginning to see that the program that runs this part of CompuServe is very flexible. It allows you to customize the SIGs to your own taste. And the more you learn about tailoring the system to your needs, the more money you'll save. On CompuServe and all other information services, time really is money.

One way to use the SIGs efficiently is to take advantage of the structure. Each forum's message board is divided into a number of "sections," which are in effect departments or categories. The sysop can assign up to eleven sections. He or she might assign "General Interest" to section 0, "News" to section 1, "Help Wanted" to section 2, etc. As a member of the SIG, you might choose to read or scan only the messages that have been posted on a particular section.

When you enter a SIG, you automatically have access to all the sections in most cases. (A sysop can also make some of the sections private, accessible by sysop approval only.) After you've logged in, you might want to issue commands directing the system: "Lock me into section 2 and then list the subjects of all the new messages there and let me mark the ones I want to read." After you've read them, you might want to move to another section and do the same thing.

This is called Set Section—the command is SS—and during our on-line tour in this chapter we'll see how to use it.

Also, we'll see how to get a list of all the section topics (command: SN for Section Names), how to do a Quick Scan (QS) of the message topics, and how to Scan and Mark (SM) messages.

We'll also take a look at the SIG databases. This is where the sysop has stored the SIG's "library" for files and programs. You'll see that it's very similar to Public Access, discussed in earlier chapters.

Finally, after we're logged off, we'll give you the ultimate list of SIG commands in one handy place. They'll be there for you to study and practice with in future excursions into the system.

BACK TO THE GOOD EARTH ...

Okay, please log on and go to the Good Earth SIG where we'll practice with this new material. Remember, the command at the bottom of the main menu is G HOM-145.

We're going to get a cup of coffee. Give us a whistle when you get to the Function menu.

```
The Good Earth SIG
Function menu:
1 (L) Leave a message
2 (R) Read messages
3 (RN) Read new messages

5 (B) Read bulletins
6 (CO) On-line conference

9 (OP) Change your SIG options
0 (E) Exit from this SIG

Enter selection or H for help:
```

Ready? Let's explore this section business.

First, we need a list of the section names, so at the bottom of the Function menu, enter the command SN and the system should display something like this:

```
0 - General Interest
1 - Homesteading
2 - Horticulture
3 - HELP!
4 - Nature's Way
5 - Folkways
```

The number on the left is the section number, followed by the section's title.

Now, let's "set the section" to number 3 (called "HELP!") by entering SS3 at the bottom of the Function menu.

Hmmmm. Nothing seemed to happen, right? The program just displayed the menu again.

Well, something did happen. You're now locked in on section 3. All the Read or Scan commands you issue from now on—whether Read New Messages, or Read Thread, etc.—will apply only to the messages posted on section 3. In a minute, we'll show you how to set

your default back to all sections. But first, let's see how this works. We'll use a new command, the Quick Scan.

At the bottom of the Function menu, enter QS and the SIG will say:

```
System contains messages.  
2845 to 3164  
Starting message (N for new):
```

This message is asking at what number to begin scanning. Tap N if you want to begin with all the new messages posted on section 3 since your last visit.

After you've selected the starting point, the screen will display a list like this. (Of course, your list will be different, since we're visiting the forum at different times.)

3005:	TEXAS	Sec. 3 - HELP!
3009:	COMPUERVE 1 reply	Sec. 3 - HELP!
3015:	PRINTER 2 replies	Sec. 3 - HELP!
3025:	CHOLESTEROL 1 reply	Sec. 3 - HELP!
3033:	ARIZONA 5 replies	Sec. 3 - HELP!

You'll be returned to the main Function menu at the end of the Quick Scan. We hope you saw on your list a few of the messages that had one or more replies listed, as they do in our example. These are threads and, as you've seen, you could read a thread by simply entering at the bottom of the Function menu the command RT followed by the number of the first message.

But we don't need to spend time on that now. In the last chapter you saw how that worked. Let's forge ahead.

First, let's reset the sections so that we have access to all of them, not just section 3. At the bottom of the Function menu, enter SSALL (that is, Set Sections to All). Once again, there's no apparent change on the screen, but trust us—somewhere in the heart of CompuServe you've just been given wider access to the message boards.

Now let's explore these scan commands a little. There are several

that are handy—*SM* (Scan and Mark) and *SD* (Scan and Display) are particularly useful. They're both entered at the bottom of the Function menu.

On your keyboard, enter *SM* at the bottom of the Function menu. The system should respond with:

```
<F>orward, <R>everse, <A>bort:
```

CompuServe here is asking whether you want to scan the board from oldest to newest messages (Forward, or *F*), newest to oldest (*Reverse*), or whether you want to abort the command and return to the Function menu. Choose *F*, and the display will be changed to show you the range of the message numbers on the board, something like:

```
System contains messages  
2845 to 3164  
Starting message number  
(N implies since last time on):
```

As always, the *N* message will show you the new messages, that is, all those posted since the last one you read.

After you've made all your choices, the system will begin showing you the headers of the messages and giving you an opportunity to mark them for reading later, return to the Function menu, or continue scanning.

Do that and the headers will look like this:

```
#: 3140 Sec. 0 - General Interest  
Sb: #3135-Apple trees  
     23-Jan-84 22:02:34  
Fm: James 70000,0011  
To: SUSAN 70000,1603 (X)  
  
<M>ark <T>op:
```

If you choose *M* at this point, you're telling CompuServe, "Mark this message and put it on the list of ones I want to read." If you select *T*, you're asking to end the scan and return to the Function menu (Top). If you want to do neither of those things, and just want to look at the next message, tap the ENTER key. So, it's *M* to mark it, ENTER key to pass it, and *T* to quit the scan and return to the Function menu.

If you choose *M* or ENTER key, then you're shown another message to rule on.

Scan a few messages, marking a few to read later. After you've

come to the end of the messages available for a Sean (or after you've tapped *T* for Top), you'll be back at the Function menu.

```
The Good Earth SIG
Function menu:
1 (L) Leave a message
2 (R) Read messages
3 (RN) Read new messages
4 (RM) Read waiting messages
5 (B) Read bulletins
6 (CO) Online conference

9 (OP) Change your SIG options
0 (E) Exit from this SIG
```

Enter selection or H for help:

Now you're ready to have the system display all those messages it's pigeonholed for you. The option to choose is number 4 (Read Marked Messages).

Try that. And notice that at the bottom of each message you've marked, you get this now familiar (we hope) menu:

```
Read Option menu:
1 (C) Read next message
2 (RE) Reply to current message
3 (T) Return to Function menu
```

Enter selection or H for help:

Here, option 1 (Read next message) means "read the next message I've marked," even if it's not the next message in numeric sequence.

By the way, it should be clear to you now that the "Read waiting messages" option on the Function menu (number 4, or *RM* if you're using the letter commands) is the same one you use when you're reading messages left for you by other members. The system is automatically marking those messages for you just as you selected messages on a Sean and marked them. After you've read a message addressed to you, the system places an (X) after your name in the message header. You've probably seen some of those (X)'s on the messages you've read so far. The (X) means the addressee has received it.

Back to scanning. What if you want to browse and not go to all the trouble to build a list of messages and then read them? Well, CompuServe's thought of that, too. It's built in a handy function in the *SD* command—Sean and Display.

Before going on, let's say a few things about deleting messages from the boards. First, you can delete only those messages that were written by you or to you. And most sysops appreciate it if you keep their boards tidy. As we've said, most SIGs can hold only a limited number of messages at a time (usually 256). You'll be considered a good citizen of the SIG if you regularly delete messages that only you and the recipient would be interested in. You are given an option to delete your messages after you've read them.

On the other hand, there's a time not to delete. For instance, if you're participating in an ongoing discussion on a board and your message raises or answers questions about the subject, or would be in any way interesting to people other than the recipient, by all means, *don't* delete it. These threads are a by-product of a good SIG and the sysop likes to try to keep them intact.

Let's try out the Scan and Display command. Also, let's save a little time. We know from previous experience that if we enter the SD command, the system will then display the range of message numbers and ask where to begin (with N meaning new messages). So, sidestep that by linking the commands with a semicolon (;), like this:

Enter selection or H for help: SD;N

This means, "Scan the messages beginning with the ones posted since I last read the board (and give me an option to delete any to or from me").

Intentional Digression Dept.: The linking of the letter commands with a semicolon is a powerful option in the SIG. Virtually all the commands can be linked like that. That's why we've been urging you to notice the letter commands as well as the numbers on the menus. The linking works only with the letter commands and the possibilities for time saving are great indeed. For instance, from the Function menu, you could set the section to, say, 4, and Read Forward from all new messages, all with one command—SS4;RF;N—which is a heckuva lot better than wading through three or four menus, eh? Anyway, make a mental note to experiment with that on your own later.

Having entered your command, SD;N, CompuServe should now be displaying something like this on your screen:

#: 3000 Sec. 0 - General Interest
Sb: #2978-ARTICLES
09-Jan-84 23:34:52
Fm: Scott 7000,1010
To: Walt 70000,0001 (X)

<R>ead <T>op:

Notice that this time, there's no option to Mark the message. You may either Read it (with an *R*), return to the Function menu and end the scan (with a *T*), or tap the ENTER key to move on to the next message scanned.

If this seems a little familiar, remember the View command in the National Bulletin Board? It worked like this. (All together now. Small world, isn't it?)

So the *SD* command will let you read the messages while you're scanning and the *SM* command lets you mark messages for a list of those you want to read later.

DOWN IN THE DATABASES

If the message boards are where the day-to-day communication of a SIG occurs, the databases are the archives. They are the forum's own library, where the sysop or sysops can store articles and programs of interest to the group.

SIGs generally have two kinds of databases—called *XA* and *X*. Very descriptive, eh? Well, no, but there is some logic to it. *X* means "data" and the *A* part of *XA* means "Access."

The *XA* databases are very similar to Public Access, the public-domain area we looked at earlier. In fact, the databases actually are part of Public Access, but a special section set aside for the SIG, a section you can reach without leaving the SIG.

Type *XA* at the Function menu. The system should now be displaying something like this:

Database for which Section: 0 1 2 4
--

In other words, CompuServe is saying, "This SIG has four databases, named 0, 1, 2, and 4. Which one do you want?" Enter a number, say, 1, and you should see:

```
The Good Earth SIG Database Access
Use ? for help
XA 1 - Homesteading:
```

- 1 BRO Browse thru files
- 2 UPL Upload a new file
- 3 EXI Exit to The Good Earth SIG
- 4 HEL Help
- 5 XA Change database

```
Key digit:
```

Now, what is the system telling us? It's saying that we've arrived in the XA1 database and that we have five command options—BROWse, UPLoad, EXIT (that is, return to the main SIG from the database), HELP (elaboration of these commands), and Change (or move) to another database.

Select option 1 and see how the BROWse command works. First, the system displays "/AGE:". This is giving you a chance to look for only the most recent files. For example, if you wanted to browse only the files that were submitted within the past five days, you could enter 5 after the /AGE: prompt. Or, if you want to look at them all, simply tap ENTER, leaving the prompt blank. (This works the same way as the /AGE switch worked back in Public Access. We hinted we'd be coming upon these features again, didn't we?)

For the time being, just tap ENTER. The next prompt should say "/KEY:".

Ah, that looks familiar, too. Remember the option in Public Access to use keywords to search for specific files? This is the same function here. And, again, just tap the ENTER key if you want to leave the keywords blank and see all the files.

Tap ENTER, and the system will begin showing you the files in XA1, one at a time.

```
- - - - -
[71635,1025]
SEN.HLP 10-Dec-82 1855
```

```
Keywords: HLPFILE SEN UST BUZZ
SIGCMNDS
```

```
This file details the procedure to
BUZZ another sig-user with the SEN
command. It also explains the UST
command.
```

Disposition:

- 1 R Read this file
- 2 D Download this file
- 3 T Top Access menu

Key digit or ENTER for next:

On your screen, notice the menu following the file. It gives you four options. Number 1 will let you read text files (that is, word files). Number 3 takes you back to the start of the Access menu (that is, the previous menu). If you want to browse at the next file in XA1, hit the ENTER key, leaving the option blank.

That leaves option number 2, which will let you download program files. As we've said before, you need to have software that specifically supports CompuServe's file transfer protocols, such as CompuServe's Vidtex executive program, to download files. After you finish this chapter, you might look back at chapter 8 to refresh your memory about downloading. We also have a discussion on it in the On-line Survival Kit in the back of the book.

While we get another cup of coffee, why don't you take a look at a couple of the files, and read one. If you want to interrupt the system while you're reading one, remember your CONTROL keys, which will work anywhere in the system—CONTROL S freezes the display and CONTROL Q restarts it. CONTROL P will discontinue the display and return you to your menu.

Another thing about this menu: As you're coming to find out with all menus in the SIGs, you can use the letter commands as well as the digits. For instance, BRO will work just as well as 1.

In connection with that, at the main Access menu, you can enter PUB. That will put you in touch with Public Access directly from the SIG. This could be handy if someone in the SIG were to tell you about an interesting file in Public Access. You could get to it without even leaving the forum.

One more thing we'd like to mention here before moving on to the X database, and that's how to submit a file to a SIG database.

To get to that option, we need to leave the Disposition menu by tapping the number 3. We'll return to the top Access menu:

- 1 BRO Browse thru files
- 2 UPL Upload a new file
- 3 EXI Exit to The Good Earth SIG
- 4 HEL Help
- 5 XA Change database

Key digit:

The option you would take would be number 2, the UPL command—but *don't do it now!* You don't really want to submit a file to the database—and we would have a lot of angry sysops on our tail if we asked all our readers to submit test files. For now, just read what it would look like if you took that option. You'll have this for quick reference the first time you really have a file to submit.

After you select the UPL option, the system would say "Access file name:" asking what the file is to be called. It can be any word up to six letters, with an optional extension of three letters, just like in Public Access. For example, BOWEN.TXT.

Next, the system would ask for keywords and then a description of the file, as it does in Public Access.

After that, the system will do something that surprises some people—CompuServe will check to see if you're running one of its executive terminal programs, Vidtex. (It does this by sending a special signal to your computer, and if your computer responds with the correct "answer," then the system will know that your program can support CompuServe's file transfer protocol.) If you recall our brief discussion of the B Protocol back in our chapter on Public Access, you probably realize what's going on. CompuServe wants to know if your terminal program will support "error-free" file transfer.

For this example, let's assume you're not using a CompuServe executive program. The system will say:

The executive you are running does
NOT support file transfers.

No error detection protocol in use.

Do you wish to be prompted for each
line?

What the system wants to know here is if you want to transfer one line at a time, with a prompt for each line, as on the message board. After you answer that, the system says:

Begin sending your data. Use a
control-Z (1A hex, 032 octal) to
indicate the end of your data.

After you get this message, you can either type in your file or transmit it from your computer, if your software has that capability.

When you finish, you signal CompuServe with a CONTROL-Z. The system will tell you that the file has been copied to the SIG, awaiting the sysop's approval. (All files submitted to the database must be approved by the sysop before they're included.)

Incidentally, this same UPL (upload) feature is available to you in Public Access. Back in chapter 8, when we talked about contributing to Public Access, we showed you how to use the .SUB (submit) command. That allows you to submit to Access a file that already exists in your personal file area.

However, you can use the UPL option in Public Access (just as you do in the SIGs) if the file you want to send to CompuServe exists on a disk in your computer or is something you want to type in directly.

In Public Access, the UPL option will work just as it's worked here in the SIGs—it will cause CompuServe to check to see if you're using the B Protocol and, if not, will tell you to fire away and enter a CONTROL-Z when you're done.

And that's all there is to it.

Confused? Well, we thought we might be showing you a few things in this chapter that wouldn't be immediately useful to you. After all, as a new visitor to these parts, you probably don't have any files you want to contribute to the SIG library. Still, it's good to know where those options are for future reference, right? When that time comes, study the documentation with your terminal program and see if it supports transmission of files. There are so many different communications programs, we cannot address all of them here. However, if you have problems, mention it to the sysop. That's one of the reasons he or she is there.

Okay. Back to work.

THE OTHER DATABASE

Back in the early days of CompuServe, when SIGs were just getting started, there was only one kind of database—the one called the X database these days. Only the sysops could place files in them and there could be only one file in them at a time. There were no keyword searches and program files. (Right—gec, we couldn't live like that either. . . .)

Since the addition of the more powerful XA databases, most enterprising sysops have found other uses for the old X database. Many SIGs now use it for monthly newsletters, indices of features, schedules, help files, etc.

Let's look at the X database here in the Good Earth SIG. After you return to the main SIG and have the Function menu on your screen again, enter X at the prompt and the system will say:

Database for which Section:
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Select 0, and a file like this one should start scrolling on your screen:

If you are new to SIGs, you are probably finding things very confusing. I know that I did!! You probably feel insecure doing such things as leaving messages, going into Conference mode . . .

That introductory message, placed there by the SIG's sysop, is all there is in X0. Other X database sections have other files, but only one per X database section.

As always, your CONTROL keys will come in handy—CONTROL S to freeze the screen (stop scrolling), CONTROL Q to resume, CONTROL P to stop reading and return to the main menu, etc.

After you've read a little of the message in X0 and warmed up your CONTROL keys, enter a CONTROL P. We'll meet you back at the Function menu. We have one more area to look at before we call it a night—the User Options feature. We think you're going to like this!

INTEREST(ING) LOG

As they say on TV, but first . . .

In chapter 11, we showed you the *U* (User) log that keeps track of the comings and goings of SIG members.

There's another log maintained by the SIG. This one keeps track of members' interests, hobbies, and backgrounds, and you can add your own entry here.

At the bottom of the Function menu, enter V and the system will say: "Option:".

Remember, with many CompuServe prompts, if you don't know what to do next, just tap ENTER. If you do that here, the system will display five options available.

A - add entry to log
C - change existing log entry
D - delete existing log entry
S - search interest log
T - return to top command level

Option:

Let's search the V log. Enter S. The system should respond with:

```
Enter search string  
(blank line implies all):
```

Just hit ENTER (a blank line) for a list of the entire log. At this point, the SIG will show you the list of members who have included their own entries.

```
70000,010  
FL George / Music,  
Telecommunications, Fencing  
  
70000,1000  
VA Ray / Gardening, houseplants,  
photography, bicycling, chess,  
computers, plate & camera  
collecting  
  
70007,411  
WV Charlieb / Chess, music,  
programming, reading, Z-80
```

As always, a CONTROL C will escape from the listing and return you to the prompt.

Well, you've learned enough about databases on CompuServe to explore this one on your own. If you want to add your own entry to the V before we leave it, simply choose the A option at the prompt and follow the instructions. You might also want to search the database for members who have interests similar to yours.

HAVING IT YOUR WAY

Well, we've put you through a lot of paces in this chapter. You've covered a great deal of territory. As a reward for your labors, we'd like to close this chapter by showing you a section of the SIG that can save you time. It also continues the idea of customizing the SIG for your own purposes.

It's the User Options, item 9 on the Function menu.

Enter OP (or 9, if you prefer) at the Function menu. On your screen should appear:

```
User Options menu:  
1 Change to command mode  
2 (LL) Change line length  
3 (T) Return to Function menu  
0 (P) Make options permanent
```

```
Enter selection or H for help:
```

What you choose from this menu will determine how the information in the SIG is delivered to your screen. For instance, you can change the length of the lines on the screen to accommodate your own equipment. (This is particularly useful if you use more than one kind of computer with the same account number. Dave and Charlie both have TRS-80 Model 100s in addition to their desktops. When they access the SIGs with that machine, they often use this option to change the incoming line length to forty characters.)

The User Options also allow you to change the way messages are displayed on your screen. You can, for example, specify that you don't want the system to stop between messages, that you do want the system to skip over displaying any messages you posted.

You can even take away the Function menu and run the SIG in that expert mode we've been telling you about. In that, all you have is a Function prompt and you're expected to remember the letters of the commands you want to use (*RF* for Read Forward, *QS* for Quick Scan, etc.).

Now, wait a minute. Before you say that you'd *never* want to do without your helpful Function menu, think back. Didn't you think the same thing about training wheels on your bicycle?

The truth of the matter is, if you become a regular visitor to CompuServe's SIGs, you'll probably grow tired of all these menus and want to suppress as many of them as you can.

Now, we didn't get you down here into the very basement of the SIG to try to rush you or force you into something you don't want to do. On the other hand, we want you to know where to come to make those changes if you want them sometime.

And in a later chapter we'll show you how to turn off the menus throughout CompuServe and run around the entire system in expert mode.

But one step at a time.

The expert mode is also referred to as "command" mode here in the SIGs. That is option 1 on the menu now on your screen. Enter a number 1 and the screen will display:

```
User option:
```

Hmmmmm. Not very clear. Need a little elaboration? Just as you did with the V log, tap ENTER for a list of the options available and you'll see something like this:

T	- return to Function level
ST	- stop between messages (*)
NS	- don't stop between messages
LL	- change line length (64)
BR	- set brief mode, which suppresses repetitious display of options
NB	- clear brief mode (*)
PC	- change prompt character ()
TWM	- type waiting messages
MWM	- mark waiting messages (*)
CN	- change name
DS	- set default login Section (0)
RNS	- RN command skips messages you left
RNT	- RN command types all messages (*)
P	- make options permanent
MEN	- use menus instead of command prompts

That's a little better. Take a good look at this menu. The asterisks (*) or numbers in the parentheses indicate how your User Options are presently set. For example, if this is your first visit to the *OP* options, there's an (*) beside the *ST* choice, or "default." This is why the system stops between each message that you read on the SIG message boards. If you wanted to speed things up a little, and not have to enter a command after every message, you could change it to No Stop by entering *NS* at the User Options prompt.

Also, if you wanted to try to drive around the SIG without menus, you would choose *BR* (which stands for "Brief mode"), which will suppress them.

The rest of the options here are fairly self-explanatory. *MWM* probably has an (*) beside it on your screen—that means that you are notified if you have messages waiting. If, instead, you wanted the messages waiting to be displayed as soon as you arrived at the SIG, you could select *TWM*.

You could even set the SIG defaults here to skip over any messages you posted when you're reading the board. That would be the *RNS* command. Right now, your default is set at *RNT*; in other words, the system displays all messages.

The *CN* command allows you to change the way your user name is entered in the SIG log. (Sometimes a user will make a mistake when

signing up for membership. Since the way you write your name will be the way it appears on every message you leave in the SIG, you'll want it to be correct. *CN* gives you a chance to fix it.)

The *DS* command is an interesting one. Charlie once participated in a chess tournament in the Game Sig and set his defaults so that he would read only the messages on the section dealing with chess. He did that using the *DS*. (The *SS* command will Set the Section for a particular visit; *DS* issued here can make it a more permanent option.)

A word about making things "permanent" with the *P* command. CompuServe realizes that sometimes a customer wants to test drive possible changes before accepting them. So, you can select a few changes here, then run around the SIG to see how you like them. If they're satisfactory, you can then return to the *OP* area, and make them permanent with the *P* command. (Of course, that just means "permanent, unless I change my mind again." You can always return and select other options for your defaults.)

And, as you probably guessed, the defaults you set in the *OP* area are in effect only in that particular SIG. That's so you can have different defaults set in different SIGs if you'd like.

Finally, the *MEN* command gives you back your menus. Since you've tiptoed into "command mode" by selecting option 1 from the last menu, you'll need to choose *MEN* here to get back to menu mode.

But wait. Don't touch that dial yet.

Our tour is wrapped up and you're ready to log off. But first, why not see what the SIG looks like without menus. If you're feeling adventurous, just enter *T* for top and take a look around.

Instead of a Function menu, the prompt will look like this:

Function:

From this you can enter all your commands. See how many of them you remember. (Hint: *RF* means Read Forward.)

At the bottom of each message, instead of a Read Option menu, the prompt will be:

(C RE T):

But that's easy—*C* for Continue, *RE* for Reply, and *T* for Top.

And, when you're finished looking around, you can get your menus back with an *OP* at the Function prompt. When the system says "User option:" enter *MEN* (for menus), and the system will give you the first menu you saw here:

User Options menu:
1 Change to command mode
2 (LL) Change line length
3 (T) Return to Function menu
0 (P) Make options permanent
Enter selection or H for help:

Now enter *P* (or 0) for "make my menus permanent." Then enter *T* (or 3) for Top (return to Function menu). And log off as usual.

Happy exploring! Set the book aside for a few minutes, and after you've logged off, you can take a look at the summary of commands we've covered here.

SUMMARY

Well, that ends our discussion of SIGs. We've covered a great deal of material in the past four chapters—but not everything, believe it or not. The SIG program could be a book in itself. It can be as simple or complex as you'd like it to be.

We particularly hope that you'll experiment with running the SIG in command, or expert, mode. You'll find that you can move through the SIGs much faster if you suppress the menus and turn off the stops between messages, for example. Practicing here will prepare you for running the entire system in command mode.

Here are the major commands we've learned in this chapter:

—QS, Quick Scan, in the SIG, gives you a list of all the message subjects, organized in threads, with the message numbers.

—SM, Scan and Mark, lets you mark a group of messages for later reading.

—SD, Scan and Display, allows you to scan and read messages as you go along.

—XA, issued at the Function menu, takes you to the XA database.

—X takes you to the SIG's *X* database.

—V displays the SIG's interest log.

—OP takes you to the User Options where you can set new defaults for how information will be displayed in the SIG.

CHAPTER 14

To Market, To Market

Like the good, conscientious taskmasters we are, we're beginning to feel a little guilty about the paces we've put you through in the last three chapters. As they say, you deserve a break. How about a shopping spree?

So far, you've seen how CompuServe can be used to send and receive messages, talk to people all over America, and find valuable information instantly. In this chapter we'll visit CompuServe's marketplace to see how goods and services can be purchased through the system and how some very specific kinds of information can be retrieved. We'll take a quick look at Comp-U-Store, on-line banking services, some stock-market information, and the Software Exchange where you can buy programs on-line and have them delivered to you electronically.

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE SHOPPING

Almost since the day people began talking about the future with a computer in every home, there's been talk of how the home computer will be used by the consumer to purchase goods and services from the comfort of home.

The CompuServe user doesn't have to wait. Those goods and services are available now. Let's go see some of them.

First, log on and, from CIS-1, choose the Home Services selection to see page HOM-1.

CompuServe

Page HOM-1

HOME SERVICES

- 1 News/Weather/Sports
- 2 Reference Library
- 3 Communications
- 4 Home Shopping/Banking
- 5 Discussion Forums
- 6 Games
- 7 Education
- 8 Home Management
- 9 Travel
- 10 Entertainment

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

You've already explored much of this neighborhood, of course. For the first part of this tour, we're going to go to number 4 from this menu—Home Shopping/Banking.

Now, wait a minute, you say. You already have a bank and you're not going to be led into some electronic store where you're going to have to buy something to get out.

Don't worry. You won't have to buy a thing. And as far as the banking is concerned, you're going to see a demonstration of electronic banking without making a deposit, mortgaging your home, or letting anyone know who you are. So, choose number 4 and the system will show you something like:

CompuServe

Page HOM-40

HOME SHOPPING/BANKING

- 1 Comp-U-Store
- 2 Electronic Banking
- 3 The Athlete's Outfitter
- 4 Music Information Service
- 5 Fifth Avenue Shopper
- 6 Primetime Radio Classics
- 7 AutoNet/AutoBase
- 8 Savings-Scan
- 9 Magazine Entree

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

Here we are at the entrance to an electronic shopping mall. Let's start out in the "department store," called Comp-U-Store. Incidentally, Comp-U-Store is not run by CompuServe. As you'll see along the

way, its owners use CompuServe (and some other information services) as the carrier. If you want to use Comp-U-Store, you'll need to pay a separate membership fee, but the demonstration we'll see is free.

Choose option 1.

CompuServe Page CUS-1

Please Note:

The Comp-U-Store database is accessed using its own set of commands. These commands may be different from those that you are familiar with.

Use the HELP command to get help. In all cases, you can end your Comp-U-Store session by using the END or EXIT commands.

Continue to the next page to use the Comp-U-Store service.

!

Don't worry. It's a little different but not nearly so awesome as it sounds. Go ahead. Tap ENTER. This will show you:

CompuServe Page CUS-4

Comp-U-Store Shop-at-Home Service

- 1 Description of the Service
- 2 Shop-at-Home Demonstration
- 3 Membership Sign-Up
- 4 Comp-U-Store Shopping Service

Last Menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu!

You must pay a membership fee before you can order from Comp-U-Store. But, as you can see, option 2 is a free demonstration. Comp-U-Store allows you to see what it has to offer before you sign up. So choose that and the demo will begin.

Comp-U-Store Demo

Now at regular CIS Rates!!

This demo gives CIS users who have
not yet joined Comp-U-Store a

chance to examine this unique shopping system. Browse through the 50,000 item database or look at the auction or monthly specials. Any problems, type "HELP" for instructions. Ordering is reserved for members only. To become a member, sign up on-line in Enrollment, #3 on the Comp-U-Store menu.

Key S or <ENTER> to continue!

After you've tapped ENTER, you'll be moved to the appropriate host computer.

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please

Then . . .

CUCAQS V 3A(36) 02:55

Welcome to Comp-U-Store
A service mark of . . .
Comp-U-Card International Inc.
777 Summer Street
Stamford, CT 06901
Copyright 1982 by Comp-U-Card.
All rights reserved.

All users of Comp-U-Store are subject to the terms and conditions as stated below. Questions? Call 800-843-7777 Anywhere in the Continental U.S.

Now, sit back and get ready to do a little reading. You're going to see a few "commercials" scroll by about the latest additions to Comp-U-Store and the items you'll find in the current auction section. After that you'll see the main menu, just as you would see it if you were eligible to purchase from Comp-U-Store.

Main Menu

1. Help & Information
2. What's New
3. Member sign-up/address change
4. Comp-U-Stakes Auction

- - - - -

Shopping & Ordering

- - - - -
- 5. The Comp-U-Store
- 6. Best Buys (Databasement)
- 7. Neiman-Marcus Gourmet Foods

Enter an item #:

Let's get right to this store's "main floor." Enter 5.

TOP

Enter:

- (1) Shopping & Ordering
- (2) Best Buys (Databasement)
- (3) To process a stored order

>

That ">" is the prompt in Comp-U-Store. And what you are about to enter is a very large database, with information on 50,000 items which can be sorted in several ways. Type a number 1 <ENTER> to see:

Enter:
Product Type
(LISt) for Product Listing

>

Hmmmmm. Let's all look for luggage. Type LUGGAGE at the > prompt.

Enter:
Brand name
(NP) No preference
(LISt) Brand listing

>

Indicate you have no preference for brand by typing NP. Then:

Type?
(NP) No preference
(1) Garment bags
(2) Pullmans
(3) Totes

- (4) Attaches
- (5) Carry ons
- (6) Duffles
- (7) Other

>

Well, maybe a nice attache. Type 4.

Style?

- (NP) No preference
- (1) Leather
- (2) Suede
- (3) Fabric
- (4) Vinyl
- (5) Nylon
- (6) Fabric w/vinyl

>

Since you're not really buying, it costs nothing extra to go first class. Leather. Type number 1.

Wheels?

- (NP) No preference
- (1) Yes
- (2) No

>

Nope. No wheels on this baby! Type 2.

Mens or ladies?

- (NP) No preference
- (1) Mens
- (2) Ladies
- (3) Either

>

Let's make that a unisex wheelless leather attache. Type number 3.

Ship-to State
(necessary for quote)

>

Is that anything like ship-to-shore? No. It wants to know what state it would be shipped to if you ordered it, since shipping charges are included in the quotes. For our example, let's use OH, the two-letter code for Ohio.

OHIO (Y or N):

Pretty smart database! Type Y.

What's the most you will spend?

> \$

Well, how much? If you type 1.98, the system won't laugh, but it will tell you there are no wheelless leather attaches in that price range. Try typing 100 after the dollar sign. You ought to see something like this:

Luggage		Page 1 Of 1
# Mfg	Model	FDC
1 HART	4700B12	87.43
2 PEGA	316	66.63
3 PEGA	318	72.59
4 PEGA	320	81.53
5 PEGA	416	96.44

**Enter: An item #, or
(p#) for that page
(CHA) to change**

>

Let's say you're curious about the specifications on number 1. Type 1 and the system displays something like this:

Luggage

Mfg :	HARTMANN	Model: 4700B12
List:	125.00	Srchg:
FDC:	87.43	Color: BR
Save:	37.57	

-----Description-----

"INTERNATIONAL SERIES"
"EXECUTIVE FOLIO". 14"x10"x1 1/4".
COMES IN INDUSTRIAL BELTING
LEATHER.

Luggage	Model	Page 1 Of 1
# Mfg		FDC
1 HART	4700B12	87.43
2 PEGA	316	66.63
3 PEGA	318	72.59
4 PEGA	320	81.53
5 PEGA	416	96.44

Enter: An item #, or
 (p#) for that page
 (CHA) to change

>

You were told about the luggage you asked about and were then returned to the luggage menu so you could then choose more numbers for comparison shopping.

If this were an actual shopping tour, rather than a demonstration, you would probably compare the various attaches and, if one appealed to you, you could order it, having it charged to your credit card and shipped to you. You'd have to be a member of Comp-U-Store (it's a separate service from CompuServe), at a cost of about \$25 a year. Of course, you can sign up by entering your membership information on-line.

A few other things: All prices quoted for products include shipping and handling. Payment can be made by check or credit card. Products can be shipped anywhere in the forty-eight contiguous states and delivery is in at least four to six weeks, often sooner.

You can be thinking about that, but for now, let's leave the store (by typing EXIT at the prompt) and go by the electronic banks.

BANKING BY COMPUTER

Now that you've left the shop-at-home feature, you should be back at HOM-40.

CompuServe	Page HOM-40
------------	-------------

HOME SHOPPING/BANKING

- 1 Comp-U-Store
- 2 Electronic Banking
- 3 The Athlete's Outfitter
- 4 Music Information Service
- 5 Fifth Avenue Shopper

- 6 Primetime Radio Classics
- 7 AutoNet/AutoBase
- 8 Savings-Scan
- 9 Magazine Entree

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Choose number 2 from the Home Shopping/Banking menu.

CompuServe Page HOM-45

*****ELECTRONIC BANKING*****

- 1 Huntington National Bank
- 2 Shawmut Bank of Boston
- 3 United American Bank, Memphis
- 4 Horizon Bancorp Demonstration
New Jersey

These Electronic Banking Services
may be used by CIS customers.

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Hmmmm! Those folks are trying to tell you something. But surely you can't use those banks unless you live in Columbus, Boston, Memphis, or New Jersey.

Not so. No matter where you live, you can open an account or accounts with the banks listed by CompuServe.

So, what if you were to deposit some money in one of the banks and told them you'd be using CompuServe to do business with them? How easy, or difficult, would it be?

All the banks on CompuServe thought you'd ask that question. That's why, like the on-line department store, each has an on-line demonstration of its on-line service. Let's choose number 1, the Huntington Bank of Columbus.

CompuServe Page HNB-1

HUNTINGTON NATIONAL BANK
BANCSHARE SERVICE

1 PERSONAL SERVICES

- 2 BUSINESS SERVICES
- 3 INTEREST RATES
- 4 HNB JOURNAL
- 5 HNB NEWS
- 6 HNB FEEDBACK
- 7 DEMONSTRATION

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.
!

These banks have some of the best on-line help in the system.
For example, the free demonstration will give you an idea about
what's involved in on-line checking, savings, etc., from the bank.

Choose 7.

CompuServe	Page HNB-40
Demonstration	
1 Personal Services	
*Checking	*Savings
*Loans	*Bill Payment
2 Business Services	
*Loans	*Transfer Funds
*CDs	*Checking

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.
!

If you choose number 1 from this demonstration menu, you
should see something like:

CompuServe	Page HNB-10
HNB Personal Services *DEMO*	
1 Checking Accounts	
2 Savings Accounts	
3 Installment Loans	
4 Mortgage Loans	
5 Commercial Loans	
6 Certificates of Deposit	
7 Bill Payment	

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.
!

Let's see how you might handle checking accounts using CompuServe on-line banking. Choose option 1.

CompuServe Page HNB-11

HNB CHECKING ACCOUNTS

1 HOUSEHOLD ACCT 02890678508
2 JOINT ACCT 02897346113
3 INVESTMENT ACCT 02892011278

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

To get a rundown on this mythical household account, type number 1 from this menu and you will see:

CompuServe Page HNB-51

HNB CHECKING ACCOUNT

HOUSEHOLD ACCT 02890678508

1 CHECKING RESERVE
2 ACCOUNT ACTIVITY

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

To see how much is in the account, type 1.

HNB CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE

HOUSEHOLD ACCOUNT 02890678508
CURRENT BALANCE
As of 04/12/83 \$875.13

CHECKING RESERVE

CREDIT LIMIT	\$300.00
ADVANCES	\$ 00.00
INTEREST	\$ 00.00
BALANCE OWED	\$ 00.00
AVAILABLE CREDIT	\$300.00

Last page. Key M for menu

!

Back to the previous menu by typing *M*.

CompuServe	Page HNB-51
HNB CHECKING ACCOUNT	
HOUSEHOLD ACCT	02890678508
1 CHECKING RESERVE	
2 ACCOUNT ACTIVITY	

Last menu page. Key digit
or *M* for previous menu.

!

This time we want to see the account activity. Type number 2.

CompuServe	Page HNB-81
HNB CHECKING ACCOUNT ACTIVITY	
HOUSEHOLD ACCT	02890678508
Date Last Statement	03/18/83
As of 04/12/83	\$875.13

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
03/21	Check 447	\$ 27.30
03/30	Payroll Dep	\$832.15
04/04	Check 446	\$135.00
04/05	Check 450	\$ 2.33
04/06	Deposit	\$ 50.00

Key *S* or <ENTER> to continue

!

We haven't been in a menu-drive section of the system in a while, so you may have forgotten about the handy *S* command for nonstop scrolling. Enter *S*.

CompuServe	Page HNB-82
------------	-------------

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
04/07	Han/Bk Cash	\$10.00
04/07	Check 448	\$73.56
04/08	Han/Bk Dep	\$15.00
04/08	Tsfr To Sav	\$30.00

Last page. Key *M* for menu

!

This gives you a good idea of the way account information is kept for you if you use on-line banking services. Let's back up quickly to the main Demo menu by typing G HNB-10 to see the following:

CompuServe	Page HNB-10
HNB Personal Services *DEMO*	
1 Checking Accounts	
2 Savings Accounts	
3 Installment Loans	
4 Mortgage Loans	
5 Commercial Loans	
6 Certificates of Deposit	
7 Bill Payment	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

Want to know how you pay bills via CompuServe? Type number 7 to see the bill-payment demo section.

CompuServe	Page HNB-109
HNB BILL PAYMENT	
1 Instructions	
2 Bill Payment	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

Now enter 2 to see a demonstration of the program.

CompuServe	Page HNB-110
Bill Payment	
PLEASE NOTE All transactions made before 2:00 p.m. on a business day will be posted to your account that day. Please use the security and payee codes assigned to you by HNB Pay-by-Phone.	
Key S or <ENTER> to continue	

!S

CompuServe Page HNB-49

Please enter your Checking Account Number > 02891234567

Please enter your four digit Security Code > 1234

Please enter your four digit Payee Code > 5678

If Payee Code starts with 8 (i.e. 8400) please enter your special number >

Please enter the payment (or deposit) amount > 9999.99

Please enter the Payment Date (i.e. MO/DAY/YEAR) > 01/23/84

Payee Code 5678 Payment Amt
\$9999.99 Payment Date

01/23/84

Is this correct (Y or N)? Y

Do you want to make another transaction (Y or N)? N

Thank you for using the Huntington Bill Payment service.

All transactions made before 2:00 p.m. on a business day will be displayed on BancShare the next business day.

Please remember to adjust your checkbook register.

Last page. Key M for menu

!

As you can see, you do it by entering your account number and special secret code and the predetermined code of the payee. You even get a chance to correct mistakes at the end.

Well, there's more to look at in the banking section when you get some spare time, so be sure to come back and explore it more thoroughly.

As always, you can sign up while on-line, if you're interested.

ON-LINE STOCKS AND BONDS

Next, we're going to make one of our famous quantum leaps over tall buildings and broad databases to a completely different section of CompuServe—the Business and Financial section.

Type G FIN-1 at the prompt.

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 1 News & Financial Analysis
- 2 Investments & Quotations
- 3 Communications
- 4 Brokerage & Banking
- 5 Reference Library
- 6 Discussion Forums
- 7 Travel Services
- 8 Personal Finance

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Stop a minute.

Of all the menus you have seen so far in this book, this is likely to be the one that may have changed the most since this book was written. CompuServe's business services are being gradually moved to a new service called the Executive Information Service, which we'll discuss later in this chapter, after you've logged off.

The point is that by the time you read these words, things may have changed in this corner of the system. We'll take you through some of the highlights as they existed when we were last here. If things don't look quite the same now, you'll have to wing it. But you've now traveled the network enough to take care of yourself.

Right now, choose the Investments and Quotations section, number 2.

CompuServe Page FIN-20

- 1 MicroQuote
- \$ 2 Quick Quote
- \$ 3 Standard and Poor's Analyses
- 4 Value Line Data Base II
- 5 News-A-Tron Commodities
- 6 Rapaport <<Diamond System>>

7 Shareholder's Freebies
\$ Indicates charges in addition
to connect time may be incurred.

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

We brought you here so that you could see a key service for investors, the Quick Quote system of stock-price retrieval. It's like having a stock ticker in your home, perhaps better since you don't have to wade through tons of stock prices to find the one you want. Don't worry about the surcharge. You'll be looking at a stock price that doesn't carry a surcharge. This trip into Quick Quote will cost you nothing but connect time. Go ahead and choose 2 from the menu.

CompuServe Page FIN-15

Request Recorded,
One Moment, Please

Then . . .

Thank you for Waiting
QQUOTE Jan-12-1984 22:24

These quotes are updated
periodically during the day and
cover 2 major U.S. exchanges as
well as selected OTC. CompuServe
does not edit this and is not
responsible or liable for its
content, completeness, or
timeliness.

Each current quote costs .02 in
addition to connect time.

Press the <ENTER> key for next page
or H for help.

!

Before you press the ENTER key, you should know that you're going to a searchable database where stock quotes are found according to the stock's ticker symbol. But if you don't know the stock's exact ticker symbol, there's help. So, go ahead and press the ENTER key to see the following:

Update times:

NYSE Stocks	FINAL	01/11/84
AMEX Stocks	FINAL	01/11/84
OTC Stocks	FINAL	01/11/84
NYSE Bonds	FINAL	01/11/84
AMEX Bonds	FINAL	01/11/84

Press the carriage return or ENTER key to exit, type ? for instructions, or /HELP for a list of options.

Issue:

You could type /HELP to get some help on what to do next. But what you need to know most is how to find a ticker symbol. If you type an asterisk and any part of a company name, you'll be told how many companies meet that condition.

For example, if you type *INTER for International Business Machines, you'll get a notice saying there are over a hundred companies with INTER in their names. If you type *INTERNATIONAL, you'll see there are fewer. If you type *INTERNATIONAL B, there are even fewer. You see how it works? The more complete the name is, the closer you'll get to the company you want to see.

The stock quotation for H&R Block, of which CompuServe is a subsidiary, is free on Quick Quote. But what's the ticker symbol? Enter *BLOCK (disregard the initials) to see how many companies contain the word BLOCK.

3 issues found for BLOCK

Key Y to list !

Type Y.

Ticker Name

- 1 HRB BLOCK H & R INC
- 2 BLK BLOCKER ENERGY CORP
- 3 BLOCA BLOCK DRUG INC
CLASS A

Key digit or ticker.

!

There it is. Number 1 on the list. And the next time you want to

see the stock quote for H&R Block, you'll know all you have to type is HRB (without the asterisk).

BLOCK H & R INC	HRB
	09367110
Vol (00) Hi/ask Low/Bid	Last
73 44.750 44.250	44.500
Updated: FINAL Change:	-.250
Exch: N 010184	
There is no charge for quotes on H & R	
Block.	

Issue:

While we're here, try out the HRB ticker. Type HRB at the "Issue:" prompt to see the information displayed again.

When you finish looking at stock quotes, just press ENTER at the "Issue:" prompt to get back to the Investments and Quotations menu.

CompuServe	Page FIN-20
 1 MicroQuote \$ 2 Quick Quote \$ 3 Standard and Poor's Analyses 4 Value Line Data Base II 5 News-A-Tron Commodities 6 Rapaport <<Diamond System>> 7 Shareholder's Freebies \$ Indicates charges in addition to connect time may be incurred. Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu. !	

Okay, let's wrap up this tour by typing OFF or BYE to log off the system so we can discuss a little "business" with you. We also want to tell you about a section of the system that serves as an on-line program store.

THE ELECTRONIC MALL

In early April, 1984, the main CIS-1 menu was changed for the first time in several years to reflect a new and exciting shop-at-home service. It's called The Electronic Mall, option 5 on the CIS-1 menus.

As the finishing touches were being placed on this book, little

more than the skeleton of the new shopping service appeared, but even in its infancy, it held the potential of being a major new service offered by CompuServe.

The "mall" contains services and products from more than 50 merchants including Sears, American Express, Commodore, Bantam, E. F. Hutton, Kodak and American Airlines.

The mall provides both information about products and services as well as the ability to order these products and services on-line with the new ORDER command which allows the user to place an order with a single keystroke while still providing safeguards against accidentally ordering something. Payment may be made through various charge cards, depending on the merchant.

The main Electronic Mall menu looks like this:

The Electronic Mall	Page EM-1
.....	
1 Introduction	
2 New & Noteworthy	
3 Ordering Instructions	
4 Directory of Merchants	
5 Browse through the Mall	
6 Talk to the Mall Manager	
7 Enter the Electronic Mall	
!	

Option 1 is an overview of the services offered by the mall. Option 2 gives updates about special on-line money-saving sales being held by the various merchants. Option 3 will provide general, but important, ordering instructions which should be read before attempting to order. Option 4 is an alphabetical directory of merchants. Options 5 and 7 are different ways of browsing through the mall by categories. Option 6 is a feedback function which allows you to write messages to the people who keep the mall program up-to-date.

This section of CompuServe is likely to be very changeable but very easy to use. Let's face it. You're a veteran already. You've been to the "front lines" and back, so to speak. This shopping section of CompuServe ought to be a piece of cake for you—and a most enjoyable piece of cake at that.

EXECUTIVE INFORMATION SERVICE

In late 1983 CompuServe introduced a service for business executives called the Executive Information Service. This service was formed to meet the needs of the growing number of executives who have microcomputers in their offices and "work the keys" themselves, instead of having a clerk or secretary do it.

CompuServe was betting that the number of executives with powerful micros in their offices would increase dramatically and the need for a specialty service such as the Executive Information Service would grow as well.

What are the major differences between the CompuServe Information Service and the Executive Information Service? The services are similar. The CB channels on the executive service are called "conference areas" or "conference rooms," but the same commands are used. Instead of electronic mail, there is InfoplexTM), a faster message-sending system. E-COM is also available. It allows you to type letters that will be printed from the system and mailed via the United States Postal Service.

The Executive Information Service contains powerful statistical and demographic programs that give the executive with a microcomputer the power of a business consultant in many cases. For example, with the demographics program, you can assess the buying power of the people in any ZIP code area in America. Consider how important that is for companies looking for new business.

Statistical and demographic programs both have surcharges connected with them and hefty surcharges at that.

A series of investor programs are included in a program called MicroQuote II. Not only can you obtain current stock prices, you can get a printout of how the stock has performed over the last five days or five years—the highs, the lows, the averages, the dividends, etc.

Data about a stock can be loaded to your computer as a series of data statements, so you can run your own program on it to determine its worth or potential.

You can even load a series of ticker symbols into a special file in your file area, then run that file at an "Issue:" prompt to get a printout of all the current prices for those stocks. It saves time and money.

CompuServe officials say the Executive Information Service is likely to expand rapidly as the demands of business for special services increase.

The EIS sign-up entitles the executive-service subscriber to use

CompuServe as well, so, as a CompuServe user, you're likely to find people on the system who signed up for the executive system. The door between the two systems isn't open for the CompuServe subscriber, however.

By the way, with the creation of the Executive Information Service, CompuServe officials are beginning to use the name "CompuServe Consumer Information Service" to refer to the world you're exploring.

BUYING SOFTWARE THROUGH THE NETWORK

One of the exciting areas for microcomputer owners is the possibility of buying and receiving software electronically. The idea would be that your computer could call up your favorite computer store, pick out a good program, charge it to your credit card, and have it uploaded to your machine for immediate use.

Some observers think that electronic delivery of software will be a "hot topic" for computer owners in the mid-1980s.

Well, CompuServe, with its Software Exchange program (called Softex), has been a pioneer in this area. Some of you (depending on the computer system you use) can already participate in this remarkable kind of shopping.

Softex is a menu-driven program located in the Personal Computing section of the system (G PCS-40), and it allows users to purchase software through the network and receive it directly into their home computers.

CompuServe's Vidtex executive program is required to get software off Softex, and if you recall our previous discussion on the Public Access and SIG databases, you know why. To send programs to you (particularly binary files called "machine-language" programs), CompuServe uses its B Protocol for "error checking." The B Protocol is available in Vidtex.

Presently, there are programs available for some TRS-80 computers, some models of Apple, the IBM PC, the Commodore 64, Pet, and the VIC-20, Atari 800, CP/M systems, Kaypro, and Osborne computers. If you have one of those machines, you can order Vidtex through the Feedback area (CIS-8), as we mentioned, or you might have gotten the program with your start-up kit.

And, if you're using a different machine, you may still be in luck—CompuServe is adding new versions of Vidtex all the time.

Watch for announcements on the system, or write to customer service through Feedback for information.

When you visit Softex, the system will ask if you're using the Vidtex executive. If you answer yes, it will show you the programs it has available for your system.

Most programs are downloaded (transferred to your machine through network communications). The exceptions are programs priced over \$150, programs requiring special processing, and line listings. These will be shipped through the U.S. mail within ten days.

The downloading is similar to the DOWNLOAD option you can use in Public Access, except, of course, that here the programs are not public domain.

In fact, some of the programs sold through Softex are written by other CompuServe subscribers who invite you to communicate with them through Email if you have any problems with their programs.

For instance, Charlie's programming company, Saturday Software, sells several programs through Softex, including Dbltalk, a split-screen terminal program especially designed to make CompuServe's CB and SIG conferencees easier. It separates incoming messages in the conference from the ones you're writing.

He and his partner, Stew Schneider, regularly communicate with Dbltalk customers through the system. For a programmer it provides a wonderful opportunity to communicate with the customers. It all leads to an exciting kind of electronic commerce that probably will be growing in the next few years.

Upon purchasing software, you are billed for the price of the program and given a credit for the time it takes to download.

If for some technical reason you do not receive the entire program, you can try again for the next thirty days with no additional charges until you receive the complete program.

SUMMARY

Useful business and consumer services abound on the CompuServe Information Service. Unfortunately, many subscribers are hesitant to explore them, apparently thinking that merely looking somehow will obligate them to make a purchase or incur extra charges. The fact is, most of these services contain demonstration programs that allow users to browse before they commit themselves to any purchase or sign-up fees.

That ought to be reason enough to familiarize yourself with the services. You're not likely to use all of them and may use some of them only occasionally.

We've left you a lot of room for exploring. As we've said from the beginning of our travels together, it's not our design to show you every single feature of CompuServe. The written word could hardly keep up with the ever-changing system. Instead, we've tried to teach you how to navigate on your own and to point out some interesting-looking woods to hike in.

Shopping features have been a fast-growing area of the system. While we were working on this book, a number of catalog features were brought on-line—book and record stores, videotapes for sale—and services like a new on-line airline reservation feature. Enjoy your exploring!

Also, remember that the strictly business-related programs you see on CompuServe may eventually disappear and be offered exclusively on the Executive Information Service. Such things as on-line banking are likely to stay, CompuServe officials say.

If you think you might be interested in becoming an EIS subscriber, you can get more information by contacting CompuServe at 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd., Columbus, Ohio 43200, or calling 614-457-8600.

CHAPTER 15

The Games People Play

"It's a funny thing," a CompuServe official mused to us one day. "We've got a good idea of the demographics of the people who use CIS. And while they probably won't admit it, there are a lot of professionals who get on the system late at night and play games—a lot of games."

It's not that CompuServe knows who's playing games, but it's clear from the usage reports that a lot of people spend a lot of time playing games.

And why not? After all, computers are for recreation as well as more serious pursuits. And if you buy a lot of games for your micro, you'd have a lot of money tied up in them. You'd wind up playing with most of them for a few hours and putting them aside.

You never own CompuServe's games. You sort of rent them for the amount of connect time you spend playing them. How many games are there on CompuServe? By actual count, lots. In fact, many probably have been added since this book was written. And still CompuServe seeks new ones that might attract game players.

Generally, all games in CompuServe's Games section fall into one of two groups:

The *player-against-computer games* in which the individual matches wits with a game program can range from the simplest form (such as the old game hangman) to a very complex adventure game where the player explores the depths of a cave and tries to retrieve treasures while fighting off horrible creatures.

The *multiplayer games*, where users from all over the CompuServe network gather to play the computer and each other, is the most exciting form of game play, many believe. In fact, it is the home

computer and the modem that has opened this new world of game playing to millions of people. Because of CompuServe's network, it's now quite ordinary to log in to the system and play a game with someone you've never met who lives in another state or across the continent.

CompuServe officials say the most popular multiplayer game is MegaWars. Perhaps you've seen full-page ads for the game in computer magazines.

MegaWars is a real-time space-battle game designed to be played by one to ten people. *Real time* means that the action of the game takes place as the player makes his or her moves.

Like a taste of the adventure? Here's a section from the introduction:

From the dark star of Algol they came—unprovoked and undaunted in their determination to conquer, enslave and rule. From Algol, they attacked and enslaved Perseus, conquered Capella and swept through Andromeda before we saw them. That was 700 years ago. MegaWars began without warning—without regard to peace or civilization—when they belittled Algol. For 700 years the Kryons have now exported their culture of slavery and dictatorship; and for 700 years we Colonists of the Galaxy have fought and repelled their every thrust.

Hmmmm! Now there's a plot for a shoot-'em-up space movie if there ever was one. The introduction indicates there are the Colonists (the good guys) and the Kryons (the bad guys). When you enter MegaWars, you get to decide if you want to be a good guy or a bad guy. What you aren't told is that there is a third force in the galaxy called the Archerons. And they don't like anyone. Thus, even if you wind up in a one-player game, or if all the players in the game are of one army, you'll still have to watch out for the Archerons.

As if you don't have enough to worry about, there are the black holes which, the instructions will tell you, are "annoying," since if you get into one of them, you're dead. There's a one-in-four chance there's a black hole in the game you're playing.

Your mission in MegaWars is to destroy your enemy, capture planets for your side, avoid black holes and Archerons, rise in rank from cadet to admiral, and avoid getting zapped by other players.

Sound complicated? Well, it is. In fact, CompuServe publishes a MegaWars manual which you can order through Feedback (CIS-8). Most people who try MegaWars without a manual throw their hands up in confusion in less than ten minutes. After all, with screen displays such as "Gargoyle @22-31, +83.6% makes 285.3 unit torpedo

hit on Viper displaced to 20-31, +72.1%," you're going to need all the help you can get. If nothing else, it clearly proves war is hell!

For those who enjoy strategie games, MegaWars and other multiplayer games on CompuServe may be just the excitement they are looking for, sinez they combine the ehallenges of a computer game and the surprises of "real-time strategy" from other players.

Following in this chapter is a list of some of the other games CompuServe has to offer in its Games section. Complete deseriptions of these games can be found in the introductions to the games.

But first you might want to browse our catalog to see which ones look interesting. The descriptions on each game were borrowed directly from CompuServc. Note the time saver—each description has the direct-access page number. And they will give you an idea of whether the game will display all right on your system. Some require speacial screen sizes.

And, by the way, we hope you appreciate the effort that went into bringing you this seetion. After all, Dave lost his shirt in some on-line casino and Charlie was devoured by some unspeakable erca-
ture in a cave. . . .

BACKGAMMON

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Board Game
Players (min/max)	:1/2
Speacial Requirements	:Upperease
Minimum Screen Width	:80 x 24
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-220

This is the standard game of backgammon. You may either play against the computer, play another player on the same terminal with the computer acting as scorekeeper and official rule keeper, or watch the computer play both sides.

THE GAME OF GOMOKU

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Board Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-211

GOMOKU is a game played on a 10×10 board as shown:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The object is to get five men in a row, across, down, or diagonally. You may choose to play X or O (X moves first). To move to a position on the board, add the number on its left to the number above it. Type in that number when it is your turn.

For instance, 49 would be the position on row 40 under column 9. The program can "learn" from its defeats. In this way it becomes harder to beat.

FASTERMIND

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Board Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-206

FasterMind is a logical guessing game in which one player (the computer in this case) makes up a secret code, and the other player (that's you) tries to guess it.

The code is made up of the six colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Purple, each represented by their first letter. Four colors are chosen. These may be all different, as in RBGY, or colors may be duplicated, as in RBPB.

To help you, if you don't exactly match the code, the computer will give you clues. It will give you a black peg for every color that matches a color in the code and is in the right position. It will give a white peg for any other match *not* in the correct position.

After the second round you will get an average score from the computer. Any round that you lose will count as ten guesses.

THE GAME OF HANGMAN

Suggested Age	:Children
Classification	:Word Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-212

Here's a computer game classic, one of the older ones on the system. *Hangman* is a word guessing game. The computer thinks of a word and you must try to guess it by guessing letters you think are in the word. Each time that you guess a correct letter the computer will show you where the letter goes in the word. For each incorrect guess the computer adds a part of your body to hangman gallows.

VIDTEX CONCENTRATION

Suggested Age	:8 & Up
Classification	:Board Game
Players (min/max)	:1/4
Special Requirements	:Vidtex
Minimum Screen Width	:40
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-221

This one requires that you use the Vidtex executive program from CompuServe.

Hidden under thirty-two doors on the playing board are sixteen pairs of different prizes. Each time you choose a number, the prize beneath is revealed to you. Your job is to find the pairs of prizes and match them. Each match results in your winning the prize and the boxes will be marked with your player number. Every time you play the game, the prizes will be hidden under different doors. Up to four people can play on the same terminal.

MAZE GENERATOR

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Puzzle
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:Printer
Minimum Screen Width	:Variable
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-227

This program produces a random maze designed to your specifications. First the program will ask what number you wish to place on the maze being generated (for catalog purposes). Next it will ask for the length of the maze—between 2 and 215. The program will then ask for the width of the maze to be constructed. The width can be between 3 and 23 characters.

After the questions have been answered, the program will then output your dimensioned maze. You will need to have printer output available on your terminal software or be using a terminal printer for this program.

GOLF

Suggested Age	:8 & Up
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-210

This is an eighteen-hole computer golf course, but don't expect to see graphics. The computer "commentator" explains the course as you play. You are given four woods, eight irons, a wedge, and a putter. You try to choose the right club for the situation as it is explained to you. After each shot, you are told your situation and how far you are from the hole. It's a good game for those learning how to choose the right club for varying situations on the links.

FOOTBALL

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:2/2
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:64
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-216

With this one, two can play at the same terminal or computer. The computer will first ask for city and team name information. Here are the commands to be used:

- 1 = DIVE PLAY
- 2 = TRICKY RUN
- 3 = SHORT PASS
- 4 = LONG PASS
- 5 = QUICK KICK
- 6 = PUNT
- 7 = FIELD GOAL

MULTIPLAYER BLACKJACK CASINO

Suggested Age	:12-Adult
Classification	:Casino
Players (min/max)	:1-4 per table
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:Any
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-281

This version is a multiplayer game played with people all over the country. The area of the computer where this game of blackjack is played is called the casino. Upon entering the casino for the first time, an account will be opened for you. "Credits" will be issued to you for wagering to make the play more interesting. (Of course, this *isn't* real wagering—if you lose your shirt like poor ol' Dave, it *isn't* charged to your account.)

Subsequent visits to the casino will access your account and additional credits will be advanced if necessary. If you run out, you may go to the casino cashier for more.

The object is the same as noncomputer versions of blackjack—to get a hand as close to twenty-one points as possible without going over. Number cards are worth their number, face cards are worth ten, and aces may be one or eleven points at the player's option.

Upon entering the multiplayer blackjack game, you will be asked to be a "gambler" or a "spectator." You may change your gambler or spectator status at any time.

ROULETTE

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Casino Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:64
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-231

This is another corner of the casino. While there is no spinning wheel in this computer version of roulette, the game operates about the same as casino roulette. You bet one, two, four, or six numbers. The computer picks a number at random.

Payoff odds:

Single number	35 to 1
Two numbers	17 to 1
Three numbers	11 to 1
Four numbers	8 to 1
Six numbers	5 to 1
High or low	Even
Even or odd #'s	Even
Red or black	Even

CRAPS

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Casino Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:40
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-222

Another computer classic, except in this one Big Lefty is your opponent and the rules are simple:

- A number of 7 or 11 on the first roll *wins*.
- A number of 2, 3, or 12 on the first roll *loses*.
- Any other number becomes your “point.” You continue to roll. If you roll your point, you win. If you roll a 7, you lose and the dice change hands.

BRIDGE

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Card Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-207

This is a solo version of bridge, just you and the computer. As South, the declarer, you will play the South and North (dummy) hands. The computer will defend with the East and West cards. To enter a bid, enter the level and suit. For example, 2S = 2 spades and 1N = 1 no trump.

BLACKJACK

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Card Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:Any
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-202

This one may look familiar. This is the single-player blackjack we played back in chapter 3. The object is getting as close to twenty-one without going over. The computer will take a card at sixteen and hold at seventeen.

Take another card. . . .ENTER 1

No more cards.ENTER 0

CONTROL C to exit game

ORIGINAL ADVENTURE

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Adventure
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:Any
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-200

Speaking of computer-game classics, this is *the* original adventure from which all other text adventures, both micro and mainframe, evolved. The game "understands" English words and phrases and as such will attempt to do what you command.

The object of the game is to explore a cave, find a quantity of treasures, and deposit them back in the building. A perfect score requires 350 points.

CompuServe suggests that if this is your first adventure, type HELP and INFO when the game begins. This type of adventure responds to one or more English words.

It's one of a number of text adventures available on-line. For instance . . .

NEW ADVENTURE

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Adventure
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:Any
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-201

This is the enhanced version of the original adventure game. It was expanded from the original to provide more challenges and more dangers for the skilled player.

THE HOUSE OF BANSHI

Suggested Age	:Adult
Classification	:Adventure
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width:	Variable
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-219

Banshi is CompuServe's rendition of the original game of Zork. CompuServe says it believes it is the most difficult adventure game on any computer. A perfect score is 585 points for the basic game, plus an additional 100 points for the End-Game (second dungeon). The object of the game, like other adventures, is to explore a series of caverns, solve the puzzles, and return found treasures to a trophy case.

ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL SCOTT ADAMS'S ADVENTURE SERIES

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Adventure
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Screen Size	:Any
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-217

If you're an adventure game fan, you probably know the name Scott Adams. He created the first popular series of text adventures. CompuServe and Adams's Adventure International offer nine of those games here. When you enter the game, the following separate adventures are available:

- 1 Adventureland
- 2 Pirates Adventure
- 3 Mission Impossible
- 4 Voodoo Castle
- 5 The Count
- 6 Strange Odyssey

- 7 Mystery Funhouse
- 8 Pyramid of Doom
- 9 Ghost Town

The adventures of Scott Adams vary in difficulty. Generally, the higher the number the more difficult the adventure.

THE DUNGEONS OF KESMAI

Suggested Age	:12-Adult
Classification	:Role Play
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:See Instr.
Screen Size	:40 × 24/64 × 16
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-260

The Dungeons of Kesmai is a fantasy role-playing game in which the player descends into an ancient underground fortress defended by the forces of Evil. The goal of the game is to slay as many evil creatures as possible and to bring back the treasures found below.

The game is currently designed for terminals with screen widths of forty columns or greater and particularly those that support cursor positioning.

CompuServe notes that terminals with column widths less than forty characters may play Kesmai but some screen clarity may be lost.

CASTLE TELENGARD

Suggested Age	:8-Adult
Classification	:Role Play
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Screen Size	:All
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-320

Castle Telengard is another dungeon role-playing game. Here the object is to find the mysterious Orb of Power and amass as much experience and wealth as you can. There are eight-thousand locations. In other words, be prepared to map the way back out.

HUNT THE WUMPUS

Suggested Age	:Children
Classification	:Puzzle
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:Uppercase
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-233

The Wumpus game requires the user to find and shoot the dreaded Wumpus with an arrow.

Commands

- M Move into another room.
- S Shoot an arrow.
- A Arrows left.
- H Redraw current location.
- E Exit cave—if near an exit.
- CONTROL C to give up.

After you find and hit the Wumpus you must exit the cave. Moving from cave to cave can only be done through tunnels that are adjoining.

COMMAND DECISION

Suggested Age	:12-Adult
Classification	:War Game
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:Vidtex
Screen Size	:32/64 x 16
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-301

This strategy game against the computer has gained a lot of popularity lately. In it, several different scenarios are provided for your command decision.

The object is to find your enemy by exploration and to destroy him. The game is over when one side captures all enemy cities and destroys all enemy units. Command Decision is played on a maxi-

mum 50×56 grid (although some maps may be smaller). The grid scale is a ten-mile square.

The map is organized into sectors according to your terminal's screen size. The two sector sizes possible are 32×16 or 64×16 . Only one sector at a time is displayed on your terminal. If you have a screen size less than 64×16 , your map sectors will be 25×14 ; larger screen sizes will display map sectors of 50×14 .

CIVIL WAR

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-203

Another old-timer among computer gamesters. The object of the game is to win as many Civil War battles as possible. You will be the Confederacy. To play, key in the number of your offensive or defensive strategy from lists provided in the game area. You may surrender by typing S.

THE ISLAND OF HAMMURABI

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-226

Remember Hammurabi? If you got your computer in the late 1970s, this may have been the very game that got you interested. It challenges you to govern Ancient Sumeria successfully for a period of ten years. Each year you will be required to decide how much land to buy and sell, how much food to set aside for the people, and how much to plant for the next year. Rats and plagues will add to your challenge. Be careful. If you kill too many subjects in one year, you may be removed from office.

FUR TRADER

Suggested Age	:Children
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-225

This is a good one for the little ones. You are the leader of a French fur-trading expedition in 1676, leaving the Lake Ontario area to sell furs and get supplies for the next year. You have a choice of three forts at which you may trade. The cost of the supplies and the amount you receive for your furs will depend on the fort that you choose.

MEGAWARS II THE FOURTH DIMENSION

Suggested Age	:12-Adult
Classification	:Space War
Players (min/max)	:1/8
Special Requirements	:Vidtex
Screen Size	:32 × 16
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-305

Here it is—one of the stars of CompuServe gaming. MegaWars II is a multiplayer space game for Vidtex-compatible terminals. CompuServe notes that MegaWars II is the first game to use graphics and color graphics and sound on some Vidtex terminals.

MegaWars II is designed for two teams of up to four players each. Any ships not manned by players will be controlled by robots. This allows from one to eight people to take part in each battle. The goal of the game is to destroy all four enemy ships. Along the way, each team will want to capture as many enemy and neutral planets as possible. Each side has four bases at the beginning of the game.

MEGAWARS III THE NEW EMPIRE

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:War Game
Players (min/max)	:1/100
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32 by 16
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-105

Those without color and sound capabilities for their computers may want to play this version of MegaWars, which, according to CompuServe officials, is replacing the original MegaWars I game. It's still best to read the MegaWars game manual, available through Feedback. What makes this new version of MegaWars so interesting is the capability of as many as one hundred users to play a single game simultaneously. There's no surcharge connected with this version of MegaWars.

LUNAR LANDER

Suggested Age	:12-Adult
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:64
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-213

What collection of computer games would be complete without this one?

You control a lunar landing module. Your mission is to land the craft on the surface of the moon safely. The onboard computer will read out the time in seconds, height in miles, velocity in miles per hour, and the fuel left in pounds. Your starting descent will be at 120 miles above the surface at a velocity of 3,600 miles per hour.

MULTIPLAYER SPACE WAR

Suggested Age	:8 & Up
Classification	:War Game
Players (min/max)	:1/8
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:32
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-214

The object of Space War is to seek out and destroy any and all other spaceships in the game. Each individual player is playing against all other players. Points are awarded for each ship hit. Points are subtracted each time your ship is hit.

SPACE TREK

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Simulation
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Minimum Screen Width	:64
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-215

This is a version of the famed Star Trek games of the 1970s. The object is to destroy as many Klingon vessels in the shortest amount of time. You will be given command of the starship *Enterprise*. Your control of the movement, phaser blasts, torpedo firing, and energy requirements will either make or break you as a commander.

THE MULTIPLE CHOICE

This is a special area of CompuServe where a number of multiple choice quizzes are offered. They include such quizzes as analogies, trivia, personalities, an IQ test, and multiple-choice quizzes for kids. Go TMC to get there.

WORD SCRAMBLE

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Word Game
Players (min/max)	:1/2
Special Requirements	:Vidtex
Minimum Screen Width	:32/64
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-232

The computer will choose a word and then scramble it. It's your job to unscramble it by guessing one letter at a time. Start with the first letter and keep going.

SEAWAR

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:War Game
Players (min/max)	:1/4/game
Special Requirements	:Vidtex
Minimum Screen Width	:32 by 16
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-319

SeaWar is an oceanic combat game. It may be played singly against the computer or, in a multiplayer game against one to three other human opponents. The object of the game is to move your ships around and destroy all of your enemy's ships.

SeaWar is played on a 10×10 sector game board (ocean) that may look like this during a game:

00	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
10	.	C	.	.	A	.	.	.	3C	.
20	.	.	.	S	.	.	3A	.	.	
30	.	B	B	.	.	.	.	3A	.	3
40	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
50	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
60	.	.	.	.	.	2C	.	.	2C	
70	.	.	.	.	.	.	2A	.	.	
80	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
90	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2B	.	2

BIORHYTHMS

Suggested Age	:12 & Up
Classification	:Charting
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:Printer
Minimum Screen Width	:80
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-218

The biorhythm program will plot personalized charts for any year. You may print an individual month or several months. First, enter the name of the person who you wish to chart. Next, enter the date of birth. Then enter the year to chart, beginning month, and number of months to chart.

The biorhythm chart also provides text for appropriate days in any given month. This program should be used with an eighty-column printer.

ASTROLOGY CALCULATOR

Suggested Age	:All Ages
Classification	:Charting
Players (min/max)	:1/1
Special Requirements	:None
Screen Width	:80
Direct Access Page	:GO GAM-239

This casts conventional horoscopes. It will ask you for birth date, birth time, time zone in effect, and birth place expressed as latitude and longitude.

THE GAME SIGs

Games are so popular on CompuServe that there are several entire special-interest groups dedicated to playing them, reviewing them, and comparing notes on them.

One such SIG is the Multiplayer Game SIG, for those who play games like MegaWars and SeaWar. This is located at GAM-300.

Another, called Scorpia's GameSIG (because a lady with the nickname Scorpia runs it), is devoted to all sorts of games, including adventure games and board games. Scorpia's SIG has two entrances—GAM-310 or HOM-143. Either address should get you there.

And if you're an arcade game enthusiast, you might want to look into the Arcade SIG at HOM-138.

Scorpia's GameSIG archives contain a wealth of information, including the solution to those maddening adventure games you find on CompuServe. If you just can't stand it, if that purple worm jumps out and gets you one time too many in the Pyramid of Doom, there's a "walk-thru" solution in the GameSIG archives.

Reviews of all sorts of games and game "hints" for those who don't want to know the solution to computer games, but who need some help all the same are also located in the archives section. And on Scorpia's GameSIG, you're likely to find anything from an on-line chess tournament to an on-line Dungeons and Dragons game.

An interesting footnote on Scorpia's GameSIG: It was one of the first on the system to have a display database. That is, in addition to the commands we've learned for reading files in the databases of SIGs, GameSIG has databases with menus.

One of the changes coming down the line for forums on the system will be more of these display databases, CompuServe officials have said.

Good gaming!

CHAPTER 16

Advanced Stuff

CompuServe's strength over many information services you may explore is that it will grow with you. When you're a greenhorn, the system has handy, clear menus to guide you on your way. And when you outgrow the menus, you can turn them off like removing training wheels from your first bike.

Throughout this book we've tried to show you enough about the CompuServe Information Service so that you can customize it. The more you can make the service perform the way you want it to, the faster you'll be able to navigate it and the more money you'll save.

Along the way, we've tried to show you examples of the major features, but certainly not all of them, or even the best ones. You have room for independent exploration, and we hope that excites you. In some cases, we've intentionally shown you how to use the services "the hard way." Not only has this given you a better idea of CompuServe, but it also will make you appreciate some of the shortcuts available.

In this chapter we'll show you some of those shortcuts using the powerful utilities in the User Information portion of the system. Settle back in an easy chair and get a cup of coffee. We won't be going on-line for this chapter as we explore an area called Defalt.

Before we get started, perhaps we better knock down a rumor: Defalt is not a tar pit, despite what some people around the system might tell you. Just as some users fear the OK prompt of the personal file area, others will tell you that this mysterious Defalt area is hard to understand and dangerous to play with because you might upset the way your screen looks.

Trust us. Defalt is easy, and even fun. And it's the heart and soul of customizing the service.

End of sermon.

TAKING OFF THE TRAINING WHEELS

Remember back in chapter 13 when we were wrapping up the discussion of how to use the SIGs? At the end of that tour, we talked about running the SIG program without menus. We even suggested that you experiment a little and see how many of the commands you could remember without the menus to remind you.

As we said, it's possible to travel the entire CompuServe system with a minimum of menus. This is considered "expert mode." Many of CompuServe's veteran subscribers, who have become quite familiar with where "all the good stuff is" on the system, save connect time by using this mode.

With it, they turn off all repetitious menus and simply travel to the features they want by using the good old GO command.

We humbly suggest that you, having traveled this far with us, are ready to think about using this option, or at least to start playing with it.

Without spending your connect time for an on-line tour, we'd like to show you the area that can make these major changes for you. Later, on your own time, we hope you'll give it a test drive.

You can reach Defalt from the very top of the system. From this familiar menu:

CompuServe Page CIS-1

CompuServe Information Service

- 1 Home Services
- 2 Business & Financial
- 3 Personal Computing
- 4 Services for Professionals
- 5 The Electronic Mall (tm)

- 6 User Information
- 7 Index

Enter your selection number,
or H for more information.

!

Choose option 5, User Information, which will take you to page CIS-4, and this menu:

USER INFORMATION

- 1 What's New
- 2 Command Summary & Usage Tips
- 3 Feedback to CompuServe
- 4 Order Products, Guides, etc.
- 5 Change Terminal Settings
- 6 Change Your Password
- 7 Billing: Your Charges, Rates, Options, Making Changes
- 8 Logon Instructions & Numbers
- 9 Electronic Bounce Back

Last menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

This should look familiar. We covered some of this material in chapter 9 when we took a quick peek in here to show you how to change your line lengths. Now we're ready for a closer look. The important Defalt utilities follow option 5, Changing Terminal Settings.

When you select this option, the system will give you an introductory message and then take you to page CIS-9, which looks something like this:

CompuServe Page CIS-9**Welcome to DEFALT**

- 1 Instructions
- 2 Setting Your Terminal Type
- 3 Setting Your Logon Actions
- 4 Setting Delays for Printers
- 5 View or Change Current Terminal Parameters
- 6 Exit DEFALT

Last Menu Page. Key digit
or M for previous menu.

!

Mark this page. It's from here that we'll do most of our work.

A good way to start is to look at your current terminal defaults by selecting option 5 from this menu. It will cause CompuServe to

display what it has on file about your computer type. (It got this information, incidentally, when you first logged on to the system and answered the question, "What kind of terminal are you using?")

A typical report from option 5 is something like this:

```
Your Terminal Type:  
Other  
Baud Rate: 300  
Current Terminal Parameters:  
1 Terminal widths 64 CHARACTERS  
2 Page size is now      16 LINES  
3 Form Feeds are        REAL  
4 Horizontal Tabs are  SIMULATED  
5 Terminal Supports UPPER&LOWER  
6 Caps Lock is          OFF  
7 Line Feeds are         SENT  
8 Parity is              EVEN  
9 Blank Lines are        SENT
```

Select item to be changed or press
<ENTER> for no change.

!

Take a minute to examine this and we'll explain each item on the list.

SETTING TERMINAL DEFALTS

Defaults are simply settings telling CompuServe how to send information to you. For instance, "Dear CompuServe: I'd like sixteen lines per screen, sixty-four characters per line, upper- and lowercase letters. . ." Using this part of the Defalt program, you can make your settings permanent (that is, "permanent, until I change them again"). Or you can put them in effect for a single session in order to drive them around the block.

The defaults here start with line lengths, which we found out about in chapter 9. A brief recap:

CompuServe displays its information on lines that are a maximum of thirty-two characters across. This is just right for some home computers, but what if you're using a computer that has a different line length or fewer lines to the screen? In that case, you'll need to tell the system how you'd like the information to be displayed.

Here are definitions of all the terms on the menu page, to help you to make your decisions:

Terminal width means the number of characters of text that can fit on one terminal line. When the scroll command (S) is used at the bottom of a page in Displa, the information will be displayed at the width specified here.

Page size means the number of lines that can fit on one screen. (This applies only to video terminals. If you happen to be using a printing terminal, this option should be set to zero unless form feeds are desired.)

Form feeds that are *real* in printing terminals will cause the paper to advance to the top of the next page. In video terminals, a *real* form feed will clear the screen and move the cursor to the upper left corner, if the terminal can accomplish this. (For terminals that cannot accept *real* form feeds, they can be *simulated* by eight blank lines.)

Real horizontal tabs can be transmitted if your terminal has tab stops and your communications software recognizes them. Otherwise, they will be *simulated* by eight spaces.

Uppercase and lowercase are both accepted by only certain terminals. Some terminals can accept one case only—upper or lower. Option 5 on this menu tells CompuServe which kind of computer you're using.

The *caps lock* can be on or off. When on, all letters that you type are uppercase. When the caps lock is off, letters are uppercase or lowercase, depending on whether you hold your shift key. Note that the caps lock does not affect the case of letters sent to your terminal. Check the user manual of your computer and terminal program to see if you have a caps lock.

The *line feeds* parameter determines whether or not each line of text will be followed by a line feed. **IMPORTANT:** Unless the lines on your screen are coming out double-spaced, you shouldn't change the line-feed parameter.

Parity—you should consult your equipment dealer or manufacturer if you are unsure about its parity setting. CompuServe normally accepts even parity, but this may be changed through the Default program, if necessary. (For a further discussion of CompuServe communications parameters, see the On-line Survival Kit in the back of this book.)

Blank lines are desired for most video terminals. However, for printing terminals, paper can be conserved if blank lines are not sent to the terminal. But you should note that this may affect the ease with which you can read the information being displayed.

If you make any changes in this area, the system will ask when

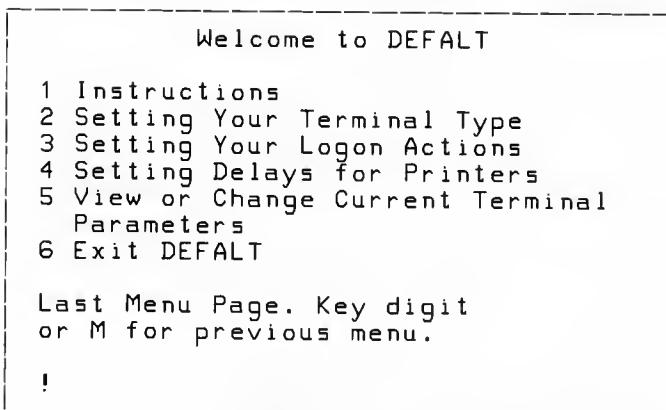
you exit Defalt whether you want them to be in effect for this session only or permanently.

Don't be afraid to experiment to find a setting you like. You can always change them again if you don't like what you've picked. And the system will warn you if you're making a change that has far-reaching consequences. For instance, if you try to change the linefeeds option, CompuServe will first display a test message and make sure that you can read it properly. If you can't, then the system will suggest you *not* change the line feeds, since all the lines in the system will print on top of each other. Pretty slick safeguard, eh?

CHANGING THE STARTING POINT

Okay, ready for some micro magic? You can change what CompuServe thinks is the beginning of the service.

Let's look at the Defalt menu again.



A very popular option here is number 3—Setting Your Logon Actions. It is here that you can tell CompuServe how you want the system to look when you log on, and actually where to "start" in the system.

All along in this book, we've been telling you that the "top" of the system (that is, where you go when you enter a *T* command in Disp) is page CIS-1, the trunk of the tree of information.

We lied.

Well, not really. CIS-1 is the page CompuServe defaults to as the top of the system. It's your starting point—unless you tell it otherwise.

But suppose, now, that you've looked around the system, and

you've found another place you'd like to start. Say, you'd like to start at CB or the Good Earth SIG or the National Bulletin Board.

You can do that as easily as picking another door to enter a house.

Let's see how.

Suppose you chose option 3 from the above menu. The system would display something like this:

Actions When Logging On:

- 1 If Email waiting, Go To EMAIL
- 2 You Now Receive Full Prompts
- 3 Automatically run No PROGRAM
- 4 First service is VIDEOTEX
- 5 Create/Edit your Personal menu

Select item to be changed or
press <ENTER> for no change.

!

If you selected number 5 on this list, the system would tell you what your current default is and ask for the change.

Top page in VIDEOTEX CIS-1

Type the page number you wish displayed when you enter the VIDEOTEX service.

This is also the page that is displayed when you enter "T"

<ENTER> leaves it unchanged
Key value:

Note that it reminds you that whatever you put in the area will now be the top of the system.

All you would have to do now is enter the page number of the service you want to start with. For instance, if you wanted always to start in CB, you might enter CB-1. If it were the SIG we explored (Good Earth SIG), it would be HOM-145. Or you might want to leave it as is—CIS-1. If so, you'd just tap ENTER.

After you've made your decision, CompuServe will display your defaults again, including any changes you've made. That way, you can avoid any misunderstandings.

Now, let's look at option 4 on the menu. The report of your

current defaults probably says the same thing our example here says—"The first service is VIDEOTEX." That means the system of menus we've been calling Displa. You can change this to the personal file area if you'd like.

If you selected option 4, the system would respond with:

```
1 First Service is Videotex
2 First Service is Programming
Current setting is 1
<ENTER> leaves it unchanged
Key Choice:
```

In this case, personal file area means the OK prompt, of course. If you want to have the personal file area waiting for you when you log on, instead of the CIS-1 main menu, you would select option 2 here.

Turning off repetitious menus will save time, but that's not the only time saver available here. Look at option 2.

Actions When Logging On:

- 1 If Email waiting, Go To EMAIL
- 2 You Now Receive Full Prompts
- 3 Automatically run No PROGRAM
- 4 First service is VIDEOTEX
- 5 Create/Edit your Personal menu

Select item to be changed or
press <ENTER> for no change.

!

In the above example, option 2 notes that "you now receive full prompts." If you want to change this, the system will respond:

When using certain CIS services,

- 1 Use expert mode, prompts will be shortened
- 2 Use novice mode, prompts will be full

Current setting is 2
<ENTER> leaves it unchanged
Key Choice:

Now, having "short prompts" does *not* mean that every single menu in the system will suddenly disappear. With it, you would still see menus when necessary, but it would turn off the most repetitious ones. For instance, accepting the short-prompt option here would

automatically set you to command mode in all the SIGs you visited. Of course, you could use the User Options in the SIGs to reset menu mode, if you wanted, but it would default to short prompts.

As you can see, there's a lot of variety here. We would suggest that you use a little spare time to play with these options to find a setting you like.

The Email option allows you either to go directly to the Email area of the system if you have a letter waiting or simply to be notified of the letter, letting you pick it up at your leisure. (Most users seem to prefer having the system go directly to Email if there's a letter.)

CREATING YOUR OWN MENU

Wouldn't it be nice if you could create your own menu at the top of the system with a list of your favorite features? Then when you logged on, instead of CIS-1, you'd have a list of your own personal hits, accessible with just a number from a menu.

In early 1984, CompuServe implemented a feature to allow you to do just that. It's option 5 on the Logon menu.

Actions When Logging On:

- 1 If Email waiting, Go To EMAIL
- 2 You Now Receive Full Prompts
- 3 Automatically run No PROGRAM
- 4 First service is VIDEOTEX
- 5 Create/Edit your Personal menu

Select item to be changed or
press <ENTER> for no change.

!

Here, if you choose option 5, the system will tell you that your personal menu may contain up to 10 choices. For each you must enter the system page wish to access and a menu description.

For instance, suppose you wanted the first option on your personal menu to be the Commodore 64 forum. You'd need to know that the SIG's direct page number was CBM-963.

When you choose option 5, the system would prompt you,

Menu choice 1
Page number:

and you would enter CBM-963.

Then the system would ask for a description (that is, how you wanted it to appear on the menu. You might enter COMM64.)

Suppose you also wanted NIPSIG (HOM-132), The Good Earth SIG (HOM-145), ArtSig (PCS-157), EMAIL (EMA-4), Mod100 (PCS-154), Religion Sig (HOM-33), and Access (PCS-46). (You can have fewer than ten choiees, incidentally.)

After you've answered the questions (page number and desription) for each menu item, the system displays the choiees and gives you an opportunity to insert, delete, or change the selections.

After you've got it the way you wanted it, CompuServe sets up your personal menu (and places in your personal file area a new file called MENU.CTL.)

The system also automatically changes your logon action to reflect the new Personal menu:

Actions When Logging On:

- 1 If Email waiting, Go To EMAIL
- 2 You Now Receive Short Prompts
- 3 Automatically run No PROGRAM
- 4 First service is Personal menu
- 5 Create/Edit your Personal menu

Select item to be changed or
press <ENTER> for no change.

!

Then the next time you logged in, the menu would look like this:

CompuServe Personal Menu

- 1 Comm64
- 2 NIPSIG
- 3 Good Earth
- 4 EMAIL
- 5 Mod100
- 6 ReligSig
- 7 Public Access

Last Menu page. Key digit
or M for previous menu

!

UPLOADING, DOWNLOADING— STILL CONFUSED?

Are you still a little uncertain about what CompuServe means by "uploading" and "downloading"? If so, don't feel bad. It's not entirely your fault. Other people get confused, too.

We discussed these terms in connection with Public Access, SIG databases, and Softex. However, looking out over this sea of faces, we can see that a few words about these terms would not be misplaced. Please indulge us as we make one last swipe at the definitions.

Simply (overly so), upload means to send something to CompuServe (usually a program or text file in Public Access or a SIG database). Download means to receive something from CompuServe.

The confusion about these words comes because they're used differently by different people. CompuServe has a very strict definition of them. To CompuServe, uploading or downloading usually means an "error-free file transfer" employing the B Protocol available in CompuServe's Vidtex executive terminal program. Using the B Protocol to upload or download means that CompuServe and your computer are cooperating to check every byte of information received to make sure that it's the same as the byte sent.

However, if you're using a communications program other than Vidtex, it may also have transmit and receive capabilities that have nothing to do with the B Protocol. When they transmit material, it's just as if you were typing it into the system (except very quickly). The users manual for your terminal program may refer to that as "uploading" and "downloading," but CompuServe wouldn't agree. CompuServe would call that a "character dump." In other words, as far as CompuServe is concerned, any transmitting or receiving that does not employ the B Protocol is a character dump.

So, what's the big deal? What's the difference?

Well, probably none, if you're transmitting or receiving text files (that is, words) or even some Basic programs. As we've said, the B Protocol of Vidtex checks every single byte received, looking for errors. But on a text file, a dropped character would not destroy the file. You can still read it. So chances are the B Protocol, with its wonderful error checking, wouldn't be necessary for words. In fact, since all that error checking is time-consuming, a straight character dump would probably be more desirable simply because it's faster. Many users of CompuServe these days write Email off-line, for example, and then "dump" their letters to the system by opening an Email file as usual and then using their terminal program's transmit options. It

is possible to use the B Protocol to transmit text, but why would you want to? A character dump, if your communications software has that feature, is faster.

But what if you were uploading or downloading a sophisticated machine-language program in Public Access? There you would need the B Protocol. An error in a single byte of a machine-language program could mean that it wouldn't run properly, if at all, when you got it into your computer. That's what the B Protocol was designed for—transfer of binary files, with complete error checking of every byte of information.

If Vidtex is available for your kind of computer, we suggest you buy a copy from CompuServe to have access to the B Protocol. With it, you can take full advantage of programs available in all the SIGs and Public Access and buy programs from Softex.

Whatever you decide to do, remember this—as far as the messages from CompuServe are concerned, if the word download is used, CompuServe is expecting you to be running a terminal program that supports its B Protocol.

Footnote: By the time you read these words, there may be other communications programs besides CompuServe's own Vidtex that include the B Protocol. In mid-1983 CompuServe announced that it would be licensing the use of its protocol to authorized software companies. Watch for it.

GETTING BY WITHOUT VIDTEX

Suppose you have a computer for which Vidtex isn't available and you can't find another commercial program that supports the B Protocol. Are you left out?

Not completely.

Sure, as we've said, you'll not be able to use download options on CompuServe. And getting binary files from the system into your computer will be difficult, if not impossible.

Still, if you've found a terminal program that can transmit and receive in what CompuServe calls "character dumps," here's a trick of the road that might help.

But first . . .

When we started this journey together, we promised you that this would be a computer book with no programming in it. There's a certain measure of pride for us to remind you that we've reached this point together without breaking our word on that score. Now, by your leave, we're going to tiptoe into the programmer's realm just long enough to say a few words about ASCII.

As a computer owner, you probably know a little bit about ASCII—the “American Standard Code for Information Interchange.” It’s the secret of data communications. No matter what computer you’re using, it communicates in ASCII, and the codes for all the letters are standardized. This makes it possible for you to use the character-dump facilities in your terminal program to capture information—words *and* even some Basic programs.

Remember, from our visits to Access and the SIG databases, that the Read option displays a file to your screen. Well, if your communications software has an option to save whatever comes on the screen to disk, then you may be in luck in saving Basic programs. Simply display the Basic program with the Read option and then save the whole shooting match to disk as an ASCII file. Later, when you’re off-line, you can edit it with a word processor to remove any prompts that may have gotten into the file, and then run it from Basic.

Many micros will allow you to run a Basic program in ASCII form. You should check the manual that came with your terminal software for details or check with your computer store.

Even if you have the B Protocol available to you, you might want to use this faster character-dump approach for Basic programs, just to save time.

Obviously, with the variety of computers accessing CompuServe these days, we can’t guarantee that this approach will work in all cases, but it’s worth experimenting with.

CHAPTER 17

On Your Own

Every journey has an end. This is the end of your on-line tour guide. From here on out, you're on your own, Pilgrim. But we're not leaving you empty-handed. Following this chapter is the On-line Survival Kit which we hope will sustain you in your future journeys.

If you've taken all the tours with us, you may think you've camped on CompuServe turf long enough to be called a patron of the videotex arts. There have been times, no doubt, when you heard the meter clicking in the back of your head as money seemed to pour from your pocket into the computer. And while you were waiting for the system to take you from one host computer to the other, you may have mused about how much money you were spending per minute just to learn how to use the system.

It's true that you've spent some money learning the system through a systematic approach. But the other way—the hard way— involves trial and error, frustration, guilt, and probably ten times the amount of money you've spent thus far.

In the time it took to make the tours with us, you've learned the most important facts about the CompuServe system of videotex. Among them:

—What appears to be a system held together with baling wire and black magic is actually a logical network of related computer services. If they appear unrelated, it's only because of the diversity of purposes they serve.

—There are several ways to navigate the yellow-brick roads of CompuServe. The simplest but slowest way is through use of the menus. A more complicated but faster way is by direct commands at

"markers" known as function prompts. The fastest but most difficult way is through direct commands in the personal file area where all programs in the system originate. The methods of moving about the system are interchangeable and available to all users at all times. Those who get confused *always* have the menu markers to fall back on in times of need.

—Once you learn the commands in one area of CompuServe you can use them in similar services elsewhere in the system. For instance, commands you use in a forum in the Personal Computing section also will work across the system in the Home section SIGs.

—The fear of being lost in CompuServe, though natural because of the sheer size of this system, is groundless. No matter where you are, a simple command or two will take you back to CompuServe's "front door" or get you out of the system entirely. Help files abound and are available from almost any prompt by tapping ENTER or typing HELP or a question mark.

—Things seem to change quite often on CompuServe, but the more they seem to change the more they stay the same. New services come on-line almost weekly, but the basic commands for operating these new programs seldom are drastically different from those in existing services. If they are, you can be assured that on-line help will be available.

No doubt, you have learned important facts about CompuServe not included in the list. We hope some of your own myths about the system have disappeared and that most of your fears and anxieties have disappeared as well. In fact, your attitude about CompuServe has an effect on the very system you're using.

A CITIZEN OF MICROPOLIS

The very first time you logged on to CompuServe's system, you became a citizen of a community we like to call Micropolis.

Now before you choke on what you think is pure rhetoric, think about it! Due to the interactive nature of CompuServe, what you do and say on CompuServe has an effect on others. Sometimes the effect is profound and sometimes it's not.

If you want to look at it in the harsh light of commercialism, you might say that CompuServe (the company) never set out to develop a community. All it did was create a computer database service in order to make money.

Maybe so, but the fact remains that the CompuServe Informa-

tion Servicee has made a major impaet on many of its users—more than the average business venture has on people.

The fact is the best “stuff” on CompuServe wasn’t put there by CompuServe employees. It was put there by the users. Everything from recipes on the Cooks SIG to elaborate public-domain programs in Public Aceess were left there by users willing to share what they have or what they’ve learned. CompuServe may have provided the framework, but the heart of the system was put there by people who use the system—the citizens of Micropolis.

Why did the users do it? We like to think they’re good people who like to share their knowledge. Any user who spends much time on the system learns, like any good citizen, that you get more out of a system if you put something into it.

You’ll find you’ll get more for your money if you take time to enhanee the system with your own contributions. If you simply prowl the system as a nameless, silent user with nothing to say, you’ll likely become dissatisfied, impatient, even frustrated. Why? Beeause CompuServe is an interactive system for the most part. Its genius and excitement lies in two-way communication on a human, even personal, level.

How can you participate? Begin in the speeial-interest groups. Choose a few SIGs you are interested in and set aside a half hour to explore each one. Check the section names in the SIG, choose some messages, and read them and their threads. If someone asks a question and you know the answer, then answer it. Leave an introductory message to the sysop just to say hello.

But don’t ask the sysop to explain what the SIG is all about. It’s your responsibility to find out. Read some of the files in the SIG databases. If you want some specifie information and don’t see it, leave a message and ask a question. Then return in a day or two to read the responses. Don’t wait too long sinee the messages to you may scroll off the message board.

If you have a speacial program you’ve written and you think someone else might be interested in it, leave it in Public Aceess. If you find a program on Public Aceess you really like, be sure to write Email to its creator expressing thanks. That’s all the pay the author will get, but in the spirit of public-domain programming, that’s enough.

Always be thinking of new features you’d like to see CompuServe offer. CompuServe isn’t exactly flying by the seat of its pants, but most employees will admit that, sinee no one has ever given birth to an animal quite like this before, no one is sure just what it should look like.

The company looks to its users for suggestions. It even provides Feedbaek as a speacial area where users can communicate directly with

the people providing the framework. Feedback is so special to CompuServe, the company doesn't charge you for the time you spend there. Many changes in the system have been made because one user has come up with a good idea.

Whether or not you offer suggestions about the system, you have a duty to report wrongdoings. Did someone try to trick you into divulging your password? Don't hesitate to report it through Feedback. Did you notice someone using obscene language on a conference channel? Is someone leaving messages on the National Bulletin Board that smack of false advertising? Have you run across a program in Public Access that you know is copyrighted rather than in the public domain? Is someone leaving you obscene Email?

And protect yourself. Change your password regularly. And, if someday you try to log on and find out that your password no longer works with your user ID, report it immediately to customer service. Your number and password may have been stolen. Unless you report it, you might be charged for the time the thief spent on-line with your number.

MIND YOUR MANNERS

Honestly, we never started out in this chapter to give you a short course in compu-civics. But since it's worked out that way, we'll continue.

Your grandmother might not know what telecommunications and CompuServe are all about, but she probably knows all about behaving herself. Make her proud of you by being civil on CompuServe, for your own sake as well as the sake of others.

Since CompuServe is so interactive, there are plenty of places where turkeys (the on-line variety) can muck up the works. And if too many turkeys muck up the works, it makes life miserable, even for the turkeys.

There are very few hard-and-fast rules laid down by CompuServe. The reason is simple. The company seems to have the philosophy that rules shouldn't be made until they're necessary—an enlightened attitude in our opinion.

The fact is that the majority of people who use CompuServe regulate themselves and thereby regulate the system. They tend to shun the turkeys and reward kindnesses and friendship with more kindness and friendship.

Following are a few basic rules for CompuServe etiquette. Obviously, none is engraved in stone, but if everyone followed them,

it would be unlikely that CompuServe would need to regulate its information service any more than it has already.

Don't crash a party on CB without first determining what you're crashing. Sometimes the folks on a channel are merely involved in small talk and they invite newcomers to join in. Other times, the discussions are serious or very complex. If they're on open channel, you have every right to watch. But if you break into a deep discussion with something like, "Hi Folks! Where's everybody from?" you might just get your feelings hurt or else get enough cold silence to freeze your video. You'll avoid trouble if you simply take time to get the drift of the conversation before joining in.

Don't respond to hecklers in conference unless you want to encourage them. They're like flashers. They display themselves for all to see through their words, then wait for a response. If their "display" is obscene, report them but don't respond.

Don't be a nuisance on the SIGs. As we've said, in some SIGs there's serious business going on as well as companionship. Perhaps the worst mistake you can make is to leave one-sentence replies to messages, such as "Thanks for the help" or "I agree" or even "Hehehe! Funny story." Remember that each SIG holds only a limited number of messages. Each time you leave one, it erases one from the bottom. If your message has substance, no one will complain. But if you leave the one-sentence variety which means almost nothing, the sysop may very well delete it to save space. If you want to make a personal reply, do it in an Email.

The SEN command on the SIGs isn't a toy. It can be downright bothersome if abused. Remember, this is the command that lets you send a brief message to anyone else who happens to be in a forum at the same time you're there. The problem with sending a SEN message is that you never know what the sendee is doing. To see a message zip across your screen for no apparent reason can be confusing (or even threatening to a newcomer). If there's some important reason for interrupting another SIG member, go ahead and do it. That's why the command is available. But if you want to carry on a conversation, invite the user over into the conference area for a chat.

THIS ABOVE ALL ...

You've just read the last sermon. By now, you may feel like a schoolchild who's just gotten a lecture from a stuffy old teacher.

We hope not, because above everything else, we want to leave

you with this message: Have fun on CompuServe. Enjoy it. Don't feel guilty when you begin feeling like a child with a new toy. That's just wide-eyed excitement and there's nothing wrong with it. That's the best way to learn about the new way of doing things in this information age. We hope the excitement will never fade for you, although your priorities for using CompuServe services are likely to change with your experience, moods, and needs. That's all right, too. As you grow with CompuServe and similar videotex services, the services themselves grow, since the users are such an integral part of them.

The prophets of the new age say information services and telecommunications are likely to play a major role in what all of us do. And the winners will be those who keep abreast of both the technology and the information it brings to the home, the business, and the marketplace.

No one can predict what CompuServe will be like tomorrow, next week, or next year. "We don't make predictions. They make us nervous," one CompuServe official said.

In this slightly wacky world of developing computer technology, nothing is forever. But those who don't keep abreast can easily fall behind.

We feel that, while CompuServe isn't the ultimate computer service yet, it's the best training ground around for those who want to keep on top of what's happening with computer communications and videotex.

Now, it's time you were on your way by yourself. Good luck. See you around the system!

On-line Survival Kit

Smart travelers, no matter how street savvy they are, always have a first-aid kit handy. It's the same for travelers in Micropolis.

Now that you've toured the system with us and have seen the sights, we want to leave you with this On-line Survival Kit. In it we hope you'll find solutions to any problems that come up in your future treks through the electronic neighborhoods of CompuServe. We've collected lists of important addresses in the system, commands for major services, and tried to anticipate your questions.

Of course, no one guide can foresee all the questions that might arise, so we're also leaving you with some phone numbers for reaching other helpful folks, like the CompuServe customer-service representatives and the good people at Feedback.

Naturally, much of this material has been covered in the main body of the book. However, when you're on-line and have a question, you don't want to retrace the steps of your tours. Perhaps you'll be able to find the answers here.

We've organized this kit into six major areas:

1. Making the Connection—phones, log-on numbers, and the like.
- II. Command Compendium.
- III. Troubleshooting and Getting Help.
- IV. Your Electronic Address Book—page addresses for major services, and a selection of our favorite hangouts in the system.
- V. Further Reading.
- VI. Reaching Us.

I. MAKING THE CONNECTION

In this section we have:

- The log-on procedures for CompuServe, Tymnet, Telenet, and DataPac—the major connectors for CompuServe.
- How to find telephone access numbers throughout the country.
- Acceptable communications configurations for CompuServe.
- How to protect your password.

LOGGING ON

CompuServe

The best way to connect to CompuServe is through one of its own local phone numbers. Most metropolitan areas in the contiguous United States now have them. There is no surcharge if you connect directly through a CompuServe number. Most other connections carry a surcharge.

To log on directly to CompuServe:

1. Dial the CompuServe network phone number.
2. Turn on your modem.
3. Enter CONTROL C.
4. You may receive a Host Name prompt. If so, type in CIS and press ENTER. This will be followed by a User ID prompt. Sometimes you'll receive the User ID prompt immediately, without the Host Name inquiry. Either way, enter your ID number after the User ID prompt, and tap ENTER.
5. Then you'll be prompted for your password. Type it in, followed by ENTER.

You'll then see the Top of the system, usually page CIS-1.

Tymnet

To reach CompuServe through Tymnet, follow these steps:

1. Dial your Tymnet number. The system will respond with "PLEASE TYPE YOUR TERMINAL IDENTIFIER." (If you're logging on at any speed other than 300 baud, this message will be garbled.)

2. Type the letter A. *Don't* follow it with the ENTER key. The system will respond with PLEASE LOG IN.
3. Enter the host name, that is, any of these—CIS02, CIS03, or CPS01—followed by ENTER.

Now Tymnet will log you in to CompuServe and give you the familiar User ID and Password prompts.

Telenet

Telenet is a service of GTE Telenet. To reach CompuServe through Telenet, follow these steps:

1. Call your Telenet number. Turn on your modem, press the ENTER key twice. This will cause Telenet to announce itself and display the terminal "port address," followed by a prompt like this:

TERMINAL=

2. Here, type D1, followed by ENTER. Now Telenet will display the symbol @.
3. Type one of these codes—C 202202 or C 614227—followed by ENTER. This will connect you with CompuServe and display the User ID and Password prompts.

DataPac

Some Canadian subscribers to CompuServe connect through DataPac, a network provided by Bell of Canada, to connect to Tymnet or Telenet in the United States. To log in through DataPac:

1. Dial the DataPac number and turn on the modem.
2. Enter the appropriate service-request signal—one period (.) for 300 baud or two periods (..) for 1200 baud, followed by ENTER. The periods won't print on your screen. DataPac will display a message like "DATAPAC: 9999 9999." The numbers are a port address.
3. Indicate that you want to connect to either Tymnet or Telenet using one of these codes, followed by ENTER:

For Tymnet—P 1 3106,CIS02

P 1 3106,CIS03

P 1 3106,CIS04

P 1 3106,CPS01

For Telenet—1311020200202

1311061400227

The code you enter will not print out on the screen.

4. DataPae may prompt you for Host Name. If it does, enter one of these—CIS02, CIS03, or CPS01. If it doesn't, it will take you directly to the User ID prompt.

FINDING PHONE NUMBERS

CompuServe maintains a searchable on-line database of telephone aeeess numbers across the country, incluiding direct CompuServe lines, as well as indirect eonnections through services like Tymnet and Telenet.

The database, loeated just off page CIS-4 in the system, will also report any recently ehanged network number or planned additions, and where the nearest 1200-baud data lines are.

It will identify with a code (in parentheses) whether the lines are operated by CompuServe Information Service (C), Tymnet (T), or DataPae (D).

To use the database, seleet option 5 (User Information) from the top menu in the system (CIS-1) and you will be taken to a page like this one:

CompuServe	Page CIS-4
USER INFORMATION	
1 What's New	
2 Command Summary & Usage Tips	
3 Feedback to CompuServe	
4 Order Products, Guides, etc.	
5 Change Terminal Settings	
6 Change Your Password	
7 Billing: Your Charges, Rates Options, Making Changes	
8 Logon Instructions & Numbers	
9 Electronic Bounce Back	
Last menu page. Key digit or M for previous menu.	
!	

From option 8 here (Logon Instruetions & Numbers), you'll be taken to the database where you may search for numbers by area code or two-letter state abbreviations.

COMMUNICATIONS PARAMETERS

If your screen is filled with garbled words when you're communicating with CompuServe, it may be that your computer's not speak-

ing the right dialect. Data communications depend on visiting computers having the same configuration as the host computer.

CompuServe has set its communications standards to:

- 1 Start bit
- 7 Data bits
- 1 Parity bit (parity enabled, even parity)
- 1 Stop bit
- (Total 10 bits)

Alternatively, you can use one start bit, eight data bits, no parity (parity disabled), one stop bit.

If you are using two stop bits, or have an eight-bit data word with parity enabled (set either even or odd), or have odd parity with a seven-bit data word, you will receive garbled transmission.

If you're having trouble with garbled communications, check the terminal transmission characteristics set up in your terminal, in your computer, and in your modem.

If in doubt, consult your computer-store representatives, or call CompuServe's customer service toll free at 800-848-8990 (or in Ohio, 614-457-8650) from 8:00 A.M. to midnight eastern standard time weekdays and 2:00 P.M. to midnight Eastern Standard Time weekends.

PASSWORD PROTECTION

We've said it before. We'll say it again. Protect your password. It's literally the key into your CompuServe account. Never discuss it on the system. Never make your password anything easily associated with you (such as your name or nickname).

And change your password regularly. To do that, see the menu at CIS-4 (User Information) and select the Change Your Password option.

There, you will be asked to confirm your present password and then type in your new password. Incidentally, most passwords are two unrelated words connected with a symbol. After you've typed in the new password, the system will confirm that the change has been made.

If you ever forget your password or think that your password has been stolen somehow, contact the customer-service people immediately (800-848-8990, or in Ohio, 614-457-8650). The representative there won't be able to give you a new password over the phone, but it will be mailed to you.

II. COMMAND COMPENDIUM

As you've seen in your travels with Charlie and Dave, a variety of commands are used throughout CompuServe, depending on which services you're using.

We've covered all the major commands in the course of our tours, but it should be useful to have them all together in one neat stack. Here's the stack.

In this section of the On-line Survival Kit, we'll have summaries of:

- The navigation commands.
- The CONTROL keys.
- The CB and electronic conferencing commands.
- The FILE (editing) commands.
- The commands for Public Access and SIG databases.
- The SIG command list.

NAVIGATION COMMANDS

CompuServe's navigation commands are the same almost everywhere in the system. (In those few services using special or additional commands, on-line help messages will explain them to you.)

Here is a summary of the commands that can be entered at the bottom of any menu.

- T—Top menu page
- M—previous Menu
- F—Forward a page
- B—Back a page
- H—Help
- R—Resend a page
- S n—Scroll from item *n*
- G n—Go directly to page *n*
- N—display Next menu item
- P—display Previous menu item

Now, to elaborate:

T—Top menu page. From virtually anywhere in the system, this command will take you directly to the first page of CompuServe (CIS-1).

M—Previous Menu. This command goes back to the menu page that points to the current page.

G—Go (G n). The powerful GO command takes you directly to page *n* which is an address, like TRS-1.

S—Scroll (S n). Scroll from item *n*. This will continuously output pages until the last page in a series is reached. If you are at a menu page, *n* specifies the menu item to scroll from.

N—Next can be entered at any prompt within related pages of information. This selects the next menu item from the most recently used menu without redisplaying the menu.

OFF or BYE. These commands will disconnect you from the information service immediately.

F—Forward. This command moves forward a page, displaying the next page in a series of pages. A single ENTER key will do the same thing.

B—Backward returns to the page preceding the current page.

P—Previous goes to the previous item in the last selected menu. For example, if item 5 was the last choice, Previous will display item 4.

R—Resend displays the current page. This is useful if the current page has scrolled off the screen or after a Help command.

CONTROL CODES

What if you begin reading a long document on the system only to find it isn't what you were looking for at all? Is there any way to interrupt it?

Or what if the display is going too fast? Can you make it wait until you catch up?

Yes, on both counts. With CONTROL keys.

CONTROL characters are entered by holding down the CONTROL key on your keyboard and pressing a specific letter key. (Some microcomputer keyboards don't have a CONTROL key. Consult the manual for your computer and your terminal software for the alternate key to use.)

And another thing about CONTROL keys—don't use them to show your impatience. If you enter a bunch of CONTROL C's, it will only cause you more delays later when you start moving again. Remember you have type-ahead capabilities here, and the system "remembers" what you type. In other words, one CONTROL C should do the trick.

The CONTROL characters that are most often used on CompuServe are the following:

CONTROL C interrupts the display so that you can enter another menu selection or command.

CONTROL U deletes the line you are typing.

CONTROL V redisplays a partial line and allows you to continue typing it.

CONTROL H backspaces, deleting the character that was there. (Note that the character may not disappear from your screen, but it is no longer recognized by the system after you've used CONTROL H.)

CONTROL A temporarily freezes the display at the end of the current line. CONTROL Q will resume the display.

CONTROL S temporarily freezes the display immediately, even in the middle of a line. Again, CONTROL Q resumes the display.

CONTROL O stops the display immediately. (Unlike CONTROLS A and S, this one can't be resumed.)

CONTROL P removes you from private "talk mode" in CB and SIG conferences and returns you to the "public-broadcast" mode. Also, it interrupts the display of a file (such as a user log in a SIG) and returns you to the command prompt.

CB AND CONFERENCING COMMANDS

Here, in one convenient place, is a list of all the major commands available when you're on the CB Simulation or in conference in one of the forums.

/STA, status, gives you a list of the number of users on each channel.

/TUN tunes to a new channel. For example, /TUN 6 would move you to channel 6.

/MON monitors a channel other than the one you're on. You can monitor up to two channels at a time. (/MON 1,2 would monitor channels 1 and 2.)

/UNM unmonitors a channel.

/UST displays a list of all users by job number, name, node, and user ID number.

/WHO gives the name and user ID of the last person who transmitted on the channel to which you're tuned.

/JOB displays the special number assigned to you when you logged in to the conference area.

/TALK allows you to talk privately with another user. (/TALK 43 would notify the person with job 43 that you wanted to talk.)

/SCR (code) places you in scramble mode and enables you to send and receive messages from any other user who had scrambled on the same code word on that particular channel.

/XCL (code) allows you to monitor a scrambled channel while transmitting and receiving on a public channel.

/SMC (code) allows you to monitor a public channel and transmit and receive on a scrambled channel.

/EXI exits conference mode and returns to the regular services.

/SQU (handle), where the handle is the name of the user, squeezes another subscriber so that you no longer receive messages from him or her.

/SBU (ID number), where ID is the User ID. This is the same as /SQU, except that you're squeezing by User ID instead of handle. An advantage is that the other user "stays squelched," even if he or she changes handles.

/BAND A takes you directly to CB Band A if you are on Band B.

/BAND B takes you directly to CB Band B if you are on Band A.

/PPN displays the user's ID number along with his or her handle.

/NOPPN turns off the /PPN display to show only the user's handle.

In addition, there are three CONTROL keys of importance in electronic conferences:

CONTROL V key redisplays what you have typed before you actually send it.

CONTROL U erases everything you have just typed if you haven't tapped ENTER yet. Of course, once you press the ENTER key before CONTROL U, then everything you've typed is transmitted.

CONTROL P will break off a /TALK session.

WRITING AND EDITING ON-LINE COMMANDS

As you've explored the system, you've no doubt noticed that the same editing system is being used in several different features of CompuServe, from Email to the National Bulletin Board.

Here is an overview of the editing system and summary of those commands for your quick reference.

First, a few rules and terms:

—In writing messages, every command begins with a forward slash. If a line does not begin with a slash, the computer assumes it is text.

—The word "string" means one or more consecutive pieces of text on a line. A string can contain spaces, tabs, punctuation, or numbers.

—In the following discussion, "current line" means the line on which you are working.

—When using the writing and editing service, it is helpful to think in terms of an invisible "pointer" that marks the position of the

current line. You can direct the line pointer to move up or down your file. The pointer can be directed to move downward line by line from the first line of your text file searching for information to be displayed, changed, or erased.

—When you “close” a file with the /EX command, you don’t have to be at the bottom of the file.

The editing commands are as follows:

/EX is used to exit the writing/editing service and return to command mode.

/T positions the line pointer at an imaginary line just before the first line of the file. This allows you to insert new lines above the current first line of the file.

/PN displays a specified number (N) of lines in the file. If N is omitted, only the current line will be displayed. For example, /P3 will display three lines starting with the current line. (Tip: /T followed by ENTER and /P1000 will display the entire contents of the file, unless it is more than 1,000 lines long.)

/L/string scans the lines following the current line one by one until the first occurrence of the specified string is located. To display the line located, give the /P command. If you terminate the /L/string command with an ESCAPE key, the located line will automatically be displayed. Example: If you were to type in: “This is an easy project” in your text file and you realize this typo when you are proofreading, you can open up your file again and search for a unique string (in this case “project” for example). Type in the following line to locate the typo:

/L/project (hit ESCAPE key)

Caution: Your pointer must be on a line *above* the line you are searching for in order to use /L/string. It always searches downward in the file. (Tip: If you give the /T command just before the /L/string command, you will be able to locate a string above the current line.)

/C/oldstring/newstring. The change command replaces any specified string in the current line with a new string where: oldstring = the string to be replaced, newstring = the replacement string. If omitted, then oldstring will be erased.

For example: This is an easy project. Use this command to change the spelling of “projeckt”:

/C/ekt/et (hit ENTER key)

This is an easy project. The /P command issued after the change command will display the line in its changed form.

/A/string adds the specified string to the end of the current line. The line pointer will remain on that line after the command is executed.

/DN deletes the number of lines, N , specified starting with the current line. The pointer will be positioned at the line following the last line erased. If N is omitted, only the current line is erased.

/B moves the line pointer to the last line of your file. This command can be terminated with the ESCAPE key, rather than ENTER, in order to read the last line.

/N, meaning Next, moves your line pointer down the file a specified number of lines from its current position.

/Nn—if you enter n as a positive number (let's say 2), the line pointer advances down your file n (2) lines (it would look like this: /N2). Conversely, if you enter n as a negative number (let's say -3), the line pointer retreats up the file n (-3) lines (it would look like this: /N -3).

ACCESS AND DATABASE COMMANDS

Essentially, the same set of commands is being used in Public Access and the databases of CompuServe's special-interest groups (SIGs).

Here's a list of the commands and their meanings:

S—Scan.

BRO—Browse thru files.

COP—Copy to your private on-line storage area.

R—Read a file.

DOW—Download a file.

UPL—Upload a file.

SUB—Submit a file.

KEY—Search keyword list.

ERA—Erase a file.

EXI—Exit from Access.

SET—Set menu and brief on/off.

HEL—Explain Access.

OFF—Log you off.

? xxx—Explain command xxx.

Generally, in Public Access and in the SIG databases, you can see what files have been made available by other users with the Scan command, retrieve files with the Read or COPy command, and submit your own files for others to retrieve with the SUBmit command.

The Scan command allows you to examine the contents of the database. The simplest format is: S FILENM.EXT (that is, file name.extension). You can also use a "wildcard" (*) in a Scan. For example: S *.BAS will find any file with an extension of "BAS" in any user ID. And you can specify a specific user ID's file area, with S [user ID]. That command would scan any file submitted by that

specific user. In addition, you can use "switches"—/KEY: (for "keyword") and /AGE: (for a range of ages). For example, S /AGE:2 would show you all the files entered in the database in the past two days. S /KEY:TRS looks for files that have a keyword of "TRS."

The BROwse command is similar to the Scan command and accepts the same options. However, it always assumes you want a description of the files you are looking at and it will pause after each file to give you a chance to either read the file or download it. To return to the command level, enter a T (for top) at the prompt.

The COPy command allows you to move a file from Public Access into your own CompuServe disk file space (at the OK prompt). The format is COP FILENM.EXT. No wildcard characters are permitted in either file name. In addition, you may not COPy your own files.

The Read command allows you to examine specific files. The format is R FILENM.EXT. Entering a CONTROL P will abort the output and return to the command prompt.

The DOWnload command will transfer a file from CompuServe into your own personal computer, if you're using a terminal program that recognizes CompuServe's special protocols, such as Vidtex. The format is DOW FILENM.EXT.

Using the UPLoad command, you can transfer a file from your personal computer into the Access system of a SIG database. Its format is UPL FILENM.EXT where "FILENM.EXT" is the name of the file for the database. You will then be prompted for the file specification on your personal computer which is to be uploaded. (Incidentally, ".EXT" has two special forms as follows: .BIN is used for "binary" (i.e., eight-bit) data and .IMG is used for "image" data. Image data is similar to binary, except that it carries with it an identification of the kind of computer from which it came. Not all CompuServe terminal programs support the image mode.)

The SUBmit command allows you to enter a file into Public Access if the file already exists in your private storage area in the system. The format is SUB FILENM.EXT. In Public Access, you'll have an option to make the file visible or invisible to other users. If the file submitted is to be visible, you will be asked for additional information. First, you will be prompted for a list of keywords which users may use with the Scan command to find your file. You will then be asked for a short description of the file. You will be limited to about 500 characters, or nearly a full 32 × 16 page.

The KEY command scans through a list of keywords that have been entered with a subscriber's files. The keywords are displayed in alphabetical order and are followed by the frequency of occurrence. The purpose of having these keywords is to provide a way to locate

files of interest rapidly. If, for example, you were interested in Basic programs for the TRS-80, you might use the following command: S /KEY:BASIC TRS-80 and you would see only those files having keywords of both Basic and TRS-80.

The ERAse command may be used to remove one of your files from Access or a SIG database. It is entered simply as ERA FILENM.EXT. The file will typically be removed within twenty-four hours.

The SET command is used to control certain operating characteristics of Access during your visit. The following options are available for the SET command:

- BRIEF shortens some prompts.
- NO BRIEF returns to normal prompts.
- MENU puts you in menu mode.
- NO MENU goes to command mode.
- PAUSE causes the display to pause when screen is full. The ENTER key will give you the next screen's worth.
- NO PAUSE causes the display to scroll continuously.

The SET command without options will display your current settings.

The OFF or (BYE) logs you off the system.

The EXIt command causes you to leave Access or the SIG database and return to the previous area.

SIG COMMANDS

CompuServe's special-interest groups have their own set of elaborate, specialized commands. They can be entered either at the bottom of the Function menu (in novice mode) or at the Function prompt (in expert mode).

Here is the list of commands with a brief explanation of how to use them.

Read commands (message boards)

RF #—Reads messages in ascending serial order from number #.

RI #—Reads an individual message number #.

RM—Reads marked messages (marked in SM, see below).

RN—Reads messages left since last on the system.

RR #—Reads messages in reverse serial order from number #.

RS—Reads messages by searching.

Options while reading messages (after option prompt):

C or ENTER—Continues with next message.

D—Deletes a message sent by you or to you.

NS—No stop between messages unless one is sent to you.

RE—Reply to this message. Prompts are automatic. (Retrieval continues after reply message is left.)

UA—Allows you to reply to the user whose message you have just read, but also allows you to write a new subject heading. Your own name and user ID is placed on the message automatically.

RP—Read previous; if the current message is a reply, this option will display the message that was replied to, if it still exists.

RR—Read replies; if the current message has been replied to, the R option will search for the reply. (Successive RRs will search for subsequent replies to the same message.)

T—Interrupts retrieval and returns you to command level. Note that if NS is in effect, then CONTROL P can be used instead since it does the same thing.

Sections

The sysop may have sections activated for his or her SIG; that means that messages on the boards are partitioned into specific areas of interest. Each section will have a name describing the kind of information contained there. Not all sections may be accessible to all users. However, if a message is addressed to you from *any* section, then you will receive it and may reply to it.

Replies will always go to the same section as the message being replied to. These are some commands you can use in connection with sections:

SN—Section names; displays a list of sections which you may access and their names.

SS #—Set section to #; after using this command, any message retrievals will be from the given section only.

SSALL—Retrievals will be from all accessible sections.

Scan commands

S #—Scans message headers from number #. Asks if you want a forward or reverse scan.

SD #—Scan/display; does a forward scan of message headers and gives the option to Read the message or continue to the next header. If the message was sent to you, or by you, you may also Delete it.

SF #—Scans message headers in ascending serial order (Forward) from number #.

SR #—Scans message headers in descending serial order (Reverse) from number #.

SM #—Scans message headers and allows you to mark them for RM retrieval. (Asks Forward or Reverse.)

SMF #—Forward marked scan.

SMR #—Reverse marked scan.

Leave message command

L—Leave a message. The initial prompts are self-explanatory. A message is terminated by inputting a blank line or entering a CONTROL Z. At that point, you will be asked for a subcommand:

A—Abort this message.

C—Continue entering.

D#—Delete line #.

E#—Edit line #; will prompt for search and replacement strings. The edit subcommand may also be entered as: E#; search; replacement. After doing the replacement, the new line will be displayed and you will be asked to confirm the change.

I#—Insert before #.

L—List entire text as entered.

L#—List line # only.

L#, #—List the given range of lines.

P#—Preview message in # columns (if # omitted, use current width).

R#—Replace line #.

S—Store the message on the board. If sections are implemented, then S# will save the message in section #. If Private messages are enabled, then SP# will save the message as private.

User options (OP)

ST—Stops output between retrieved messages.

NS—No stop between retrieved messages (ST or NS status marked with *).

LL—Sets terminal line length at number of characters.

BR—(Brief) Suppresses prompting of possible commands, subcommands, or options. This may also be set by the Brief option in Default.

NB—Clears Brief mode.

TWM—Upon entry to a SIG, if there are any messages ad-

dressed to you by name and/or user ID, they will be typed (members only).

MWM—Instead of typing waiting messages, simply mark them for retrieval with the RM command (members only).

RNS—Skips messages that you left (members only).

RNT—Types messages that you left (members only).

Multiple commands

Multiple commands can be separated by semicolons.

Example:

OP;LL 32;T;RR 9900

This means do OP command, set line length at thirty-two characters, return to top of the main menu, and reverse retrieve from #9900.

Output formatting

At the beginning of an input line:

- . (period)—Forces output to begin a new line.
- .>#—Moves left margin # spaces to right.
- .<—Moves beginning of line to column 1, regardless of the .># value.
- .>0—Clears margin set.

Other features

B—Allows member to read bulletins from sysop.

CO—Enters the conference system. Here the user may converse with other users and participate in scheduled conferences, doing so in real time.

E—Exits from the SIG.

M—if the user entered from Displa, you will return there.

MI—Allows user to read membership information.

NEW—Types a list of new features. You may use this whenever the displayed version number changes to find out what new features or changes have occurred since the previous version. Information will be entered in the inverse order of changes.

OFF—Ends the current job and disconnects your terminal from the system.

T—Exits to the top Displa menu.

U—Views log-in record of those accessing the SIG.

V—Allows member to read or search database of user interests.

X—Allows member to enter the X database.

XA—Allows member to enter the XA (Access) database.

UST—User status report. Issued at the Function prompt, this will give you a list of the other members currently in the SIG, listed by user ID and node.

III. TROUBLESHOOTING AND GETTING HELP

Even after your tours with us here, we would expect that from time to time you will run across a problem that we didn't address.

In this section we'll try to anticipate the most frequently asked questions about CompuServe. But in case we don't hit yours, we're also showing you several ways to ask for help from CompuServe.

Finally, we'll also have definitions of some of the most common error messages used on the system and a glossary of common computer-networking terms.

FEEDBACK AND COMPUERVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Feedback is a special area of CompuServc where you can leave your comments and questions, a kind of on-line letter to the editor. You are invited to write a message to the customer-service representatives, just as you might in Email. To get to Feedback, enter G CIS-8 from any prompt in the system.

The time you spend in Feedback is not billed and you'll receive answers to your questions either through Email or direct contact.

Also, you can order written documentation for most of the services from Feedback. If the documentation you want isn't listed, you can ask about it in a message in Feedback directed to customer service.

Of course, you can also talk with customer service by telephone. The toll free WATS line outside Ohio is 800-848-8990. Inside Ohio, call 614-457-8650.

The customer-service office is open from 8:00 A.M. to midnight Eastern Standard Time Monday through Friday, and 2:00 P.M. to midnight on weekends.

WHO, WHERE, WHAT, WHEN, WHY?— QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Here are some of the more common questions we hear around the system.

How do I review my bill? And what if I want to change from credit-card charges to direct billing?

All of this can be handled on-line. From CIS-4 (User Information), you can take an option that will show you the current CompuServe connect-time rates and your charges to date. Also, there are options to change how you're being billed (credit card or direct mailing) and your billing address.

Speaking of my bill, my statement shows a "transaction date" on a date I know I didn't use the service. Was someone else using my user ID?

The transaction date is the date that your account was actually charged. It doesn't directly relate to the day you used the service.

If I don't "log off" the service, but simply hang up the phone, will the system know that I'm gone? Will I be billed for any extra time?

If you log off (enter OFF or BYE) before hanging up, there is no additional charge. However, if the phone is just hung up, there may be additional connect time billed up until the system can detect that you're gone. This usually takes from one to seven minutes but can take up to twenty minutes on a busy night. The secret is to log off—don't just hang up.

How are Comp-U-Store charges calculated?

The Comp-U-Store database is a value-added area of the system. Services you request from it are charged at the Comp-U-Store rates, which include your basic connect rate. You can contact Comp-U-Store toll free if you have further questions at 800-243-9000.

What about these surcharges? Why are there extra charges for accessing some of the different databases and services in CompuServe?

CompuServe has contracted with various information providers to make their information available to customers. It pays these services for the use of their data. These added costs must be covered in CompuServe's charges. Since the customers have varying needs for various information, CompuServe added a premium-program charge for accessing particular services to avoid raising connect-time rates for everyone.

I'm not able to access the system directly through CompuServe's network. How do I request that CompuServe add my city to the network?

The establishment of a direct number in your city requires that an item of hardware called a *node* be placed in an office in your city

and that a phone rotor system be set up by your local telephone company. The cost of this is about \$20,000. CompuServe has to have some justification for the expense. We would suggest that you start with a letter through Feedback. You might also contact other CompuServe subscribers in your town and urge them to write Feedback.

Why don't some of the regular commands work in the Official Airline Guide Electronic Edition (OAG EE) portion of the service?

The OAG EE service is provided by the Official Airline Guide for use by CompuServe's customers and has its own set of commands for accessing the flight information. The commands are easy to learn and can be found in the instructions before entering the OAG EE service.

I have more than one account number with CompuServe and I like to check both to see if I have Email waiting. Do I have to log off and redial between numbers?

No. There's a nifty, little-known command called LOG that you can use. At a prompt in the main system (that is, outside programs like Public Access), just enter LOG. That will log you off and return you to the user ID prompt so that you can log in with another number.

I don't type well and I often make a typing error when I'm entering my ID number and password. Do I have to hang up and redial?

No. If you enter the wrong number at the User ID prompt, just enter a CONTROL C at the Password prompt and the system will give you the User ID prompt again. If you type the wrong password, don't worry about it—the system always gives you three or four chances to get the password right.

What's a PPN?

PPN (which stands for "Programmer's Project Number") is another term for user ID. Even though the term is still rather common around the system, it's confusing for many newcomers, so we opted to avoid it in this book.

Is there a fast way to travel from SIG to SIG?

Sure. With the all-powerful GO command. As you travel the system, you'll have an opportunity to take note of the page addresses of your favorite services. From the Function menu in any SIG (or the Function prompt, if you're running the SIG in command mode), you can enter the GO command and the address of the next service you want. For example, G PCS-117.

I think I have a great idea for a new SIG. How can I propose it to CompuServe?

CompuServe has been adding a few new forums to its on-line community each month, so you've got company. Some prospective sysops simply send a message to Feedback, and obviously that is your direct link to CompuServe. However, there's a time for the convenience of electronic mail and there's a time for old-fashioned, low-tech paper. Considering that CompuServe officials every day see hundreds of printouts of Email and interoffice memos, you might do better with a regular paper letter. If you're really serious about your proposal, you'll want to stand out in the crowd—at a computer-oriented place like CompuServe, letters are noticeable. We'd suggest that you outline your proposal in no more than 2½ pages, telling the goals of your proposed forum, what you'd use the databases, message boards, and conference facilities for. Remember that CompuServe is a business, so in your letter talk about who you think the prospective audience is. Decide what general area of the system would be best for such a service (Home section, Personal Computing section, etc.) and address your introductory letter to the product manager of that section, CompuServe Information Service, 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd., Columbus, Ohio 43220. Include in your letter your user ID number in case the manager wants to write. Offer to telephone to follow up if he or she is interested. And that business office number is 614-457-8600.

My computer has uppercase and lowercase letters, but they don't show up on my screen when I'm talking to CompuServe. What am I doing wrong?

Ah, you need to visit Defalt, Friend, and inform CompuServe about the kind of equipment you're using. We have a fairly extensive discussion of how to use Defalt in chapters 9 and 16. Time to review, huh?

What's an IP?

That stands for "Information Provider." In general, anyone who provides a service on CompuServe is an IP. However, in usage, IP has come to mean those who provide services in the main section of CompuServe, such as the news wires and the on-line airline reservation services, as opposed to the sysops who run SIGs.

Help! I'm getting only garble on my screen instead of words. What's going on?

It may be that your computer isn't properly "configured" for CompuServe. You need to have your communications equipment set to even parity, seven-bit words, one stop bit. For more details, see

the section on configuration in the On-line Survival Kit. If that's not the problem, it might be a problem with the data line itself. If the problem persists (as the pharmaceutical companies say), report the problem to the customer-service representatives, 800-848-8990 (or in Ohio, 614-457-8650).

All of a sudden, I can't log on. I know I'm typing in the correct user ID number, but it's as if the system doesn't recognize my password anymore.

Well, have you changed your password lately? (See the section on protecting your password, elsewhere in this section.) If so, is it possible that you've forgotten the new password or made a typing error when you entered the new one? If that's not it, have you paid your CompuServe bill lately? No, seriously—if your number has been "turned off" for any reason, CompuServe simply zaps the password. Whatever the possible reason, call customer service immediately and report the problem. The representative there can look up your record and see if there's an obvious problem.

My family is getting very tired of my tying up the phone line all the time to talk to CompuServe. This isn't really a technical problem, obviously, but do you have any suggestions for keeping peace in the family?

Well, CompuServe does dominate a phone line. Some users have tried to solve the problem with a new feature from some phone companies called "Call Waiting" which allows them to be notified that someone is trying to call in. Unfortunately, some of them report less than satisfactory results—the Call-Waiting message simply dumps them off-line abruptly. Others who have decided that CompuServe will be a big part of their lives go ahead and have a second phone line installed. Yes, that is additional expense, but considering what you've already got tied up in your computer, software, and modem, it's not all that much more.

I have two computers and I like the way CompuServe displays on one of them. However, the new one has a smaller screen and everything seems jumbled up. Do I have to purchase another user ID number for the new machine?

No. All you have to do is reset your defaults when you're using the second machine to connect with CompuServe (see chapter 16). Also, if you're only going to a specific SIG and you don't want to go to all the trouble of going through Default, you can go to the SIG and reset the User Options for that SIG for that one visit only. (See chapter 13 for details of that.)

On CB, I can't seem to get a word in edgewise. When I'm trying to type a message, all the incoming messages interrupt what I'm typing and I lose my place.

First of all, while the interruptions are distracting, the system is "remembering" what you type so you're not losing the characters you're typing in. Also, you need to take another look at the CONTROL keys section. Two of them are designed for your problem—CONTROL V will redisplay the partial line you are entering and allow you to continue typing it. This is handy if all the incoming messages have made you lose your train of thought. And if you've had second thoughts about the message you're trying to send, CONTROL U will delete it before you tap ENTER. If the CONTROL keys don't meet your needs, you might consider buying a terminal program with a split screen that allows you to separate incoming from outgoing messages. Charlie's software company, Saturday Software, offers one for some computers called DbTalk on CompuServe's Softex feature. Other companies are also coming out with split-screen features these days. If you're a dedicated conferencing fan, you might want to invest in one.

I can't find my Email! Following the options the system gave me after I received it, I saved it to disk, but now I don't know how to see it again.

A common problem. When you selected the "Save and Delete from the mailbox" option in Email, the letter was placed in your private storage area of the system. The easiest way to read it again is (1) go to the personal file area (with a PER command); (2) enter a catalog command, and you should get a list of the files in your storage area, including your Email.

OPERATOR AND NETWORK MESSAGES

Occasionally CompuServe may send you a message to notify you to log off before the system is taken down. It is important, especially if you're using your database files, to log off promptly. If you don't, you may lose some of the information you were entering.

In addition, if there's a problem with the system, you may receive a "network message," such as:

```
? NTWCCN=Cannot Connect  
? NTWLCP=Lost Connect Path  
? NTWSPR=System problem, please try  
again later.
```

If you receive any of these, hang up your telephone and try again later.

Meanwhile, this message:

%NTWCPR - Communications Problem,
PLEASE wait.

This means that the network path that your terminal was using to connect to the CompuServe Information Service has been disrupted. The network will try to reconnect your terminal to the system. If the User ID message appears, you should log in again immediately. If it does not appear, hang up and try again later.

GLOSSARY

Some of the terms used in this book and other computer-related manuals are clear in context. However, it never hurts to have a brief glossary of some of the frequently used terms, particularly, in our case, the words that deal with networking.

carriage return (ENTER or RETURN)—is the specific key on the keyboard that enters the current line into the computer.

CRT (cathode ray tube)—is a televisionlike terminal.

database—is a collection of information that is, in this case, stored on the computer.

default—is the action that takes place unless you specify another action. For instance, CompuServe “defaults” to displaying eighty-character lines. If you’d like to have sixty-four-character lines, you must set your defaults in the On-Line User Options section.

download—is the process of transferring a file of data from CompuServe’s storage area to your own computer.

Feedback—is the area of CompuServe that allows you to ask questions and order documentation.

file—is a collection of data.

forums (sometimes called SIGs)—are special-interest groups or clubs containing information on specific subjects.

hardcopy—is a printout or a copy from a terminal that uses paper.

host computer—is CompuServe’s computer to which you are connected.

initial page—is the first page of information that is accessed when you log on to the system.

job—is a user’s individual session while logged on to the CompuServe computer.

log-off—is the sequence that disconnects you from the system.

log-on—is the sequence that connects you with the system.

menu—is the list of options from which you may select in the system.

network—is the general term for the system communications link and equipment that enables you to connect to CompuServe in Columbus, Ohio. CompuServe operates its own network in most major cities in the United States. Access from other cities is available via a supplementary network (such as Tymnet) at an additional charge.

node—is a specialized communications computer that allows many terminals to communicate through the same line to CompuServe's computer complex in Columbus.

password—is a unique set of characters that secure entry into the service for a unique user ID.

premium service—is a special item, such as the Census reports in CompuServe, that have an additional charge for the data retrieved. You will always be notified in advance if a feature is a premium service.

prompt—is the message displayed when the computer is waiting for input.

Softex—stands for Software Exchange, which allows users equipped with the proper version of the executive software to purchase programs on-line. These programs are downloaded to your computer upon purchase.

terminal—is a keyboard and printing or display mechanism used to enter data into a computer and to display output from a computer. A microcomputer that is running "terminal-emulation software" is considered a terminal.

upload—is the process of transferring a file from your computer to CompuServe. (This is the opposite of *download*.)

videotex—is an easy-to-use interactive system for accessing remote databases. On CompuServe the page formats are sometimes called *videotex*.

Vidtex—is a terminal-emulation program that is specially designed for use with CompuServe.

IV. YOUR ELECTRONIC ADDRESS BOOK

We want you to be able to avoid the traffic jams in Micropolis by knowing all the shortcuts you can. The GO command is your ticket to the expressway. To help you use it, we've devoted this section to

some of the more popular page addresses in the system. To access the services, just enter at any prompt the command G followed by a space and the page number. (For example, G EMA-1 to go to Email.)

The only problem with talking about specific page addresses in CompuServe is, of course, that the system is constantly changing, being updated and improved. So it may be that a few of these addresses are outdated.

Still, you now know enough to take care of yourself. Just go to the Index (G-IND-1) and look up the new address if you run into problems. Also, watch the weekly "What's New" bulletins (G NEW-1). Most changes in the system are announced there first.

Also in this section we'll show you some of our favorite parts of the system. On all our on-line tours, we've picked services that could teach you general commands you could use throughout the system. That's a good way for you to learn, but it didn't give us a chance to show you much of our stomping ground. So, if you'll indulge us, we'd like to devote a few pages to some of the features in CompuServe that we particularly like.

And we'll have a list of nodes, the codes for the origination points for calls. These codes show up on USTAT lists in conference and in SIGs. This list will help you decode the node, so to speak.

But first . . .

QUICK REFERENCE

Here are some of the most commonly called numbers in the system, for your quick reference:

- Email: Main menu, EMA-1. To send mail, EMA-4. To read mail, EMA-3.
- Public Access: PCS-46.
- National Bulletin Board: HOM-23.
- Feedback: CIS-8.
- Billing information: CIS-4.
- Setting terminal defaults: CIS-9.
- Changing password: CIS-4.
- CompuServe Index: IND-1.
- CB Simulation: CB-1.
- Home section SIGs: HOM-50.
- Personal Computing section SIGs: PCS-50.

CRITICS' CHOICES

This is the section where Dave and Charlie go out on a limb and tell you a few of their favorite on-line services (with their system page

addresses). Obviously, this isn't an exhaustive list—there are literally hundreds of nooks and crannies to be explored on CompuServe and more being added all the time.

These features are meant to supplement those we saw on our tours. And, of course, by giving you this list, we certainly don't mean to imply that these are the *only* sights to see in this electronic burg. On the contrary, we hope you'll let this be a starting point for your own research. After all, part of the joy of CompuServe is finding your own turf!

So, in no particular order . . .

The Multiple Choice (TMC-1)—A collection of tests designed to be educational and entertaining, usually ranging from trivia to personality profiles. Not only is this fun, but it serves another purpose. Every home-computer owner looks for a few programs to show off the computer with. Try this one on your next visitor.

Cupcake's CB Society (CUP-1)—Cupcake is a charming New Yorker who in "real life" is named Terry Biener. She writes the society news of CompuServe's CB Simulation. The feature includes introduction of new CBers, interviews with regulars on the system, news of CB parties, and more.

Associated Press Videotex (APV-1)—News addicts are regulars to page HOM-10 of the system, where newspapers currently on-line have a menu. AP prepares this special edition for videotex readers.

The User Directory (HOM-30)—Looking for someone with similar interests? This is a database you can search to find the user IDs of other subscribers. You can look for users by cities, states, or interests, and you can enter your own information.

Human Sexuality (HSX-1)—This is a database of information on human sexuality. Here you may leave questions for the sponsor, Clinical Communications, Inc., of Shady, N.Y., who are likely to answer in database articles. The introduction to the features says, "Only readers who are comfortable with such subjects and their frank treatment are advised to proceed to the next page."

The Victory Garden (VIC-1)—A collection of articles designed to guide the home gardener through all phases of gardening. This feature is managed by Ted Batutis who has a Ph.D. in vegetable crops from Cornell University. The service is an adjunct to the Good Earth SIG (HOM-145) and questions for Ted may be left in the SIG.

Speaking of SIGs . . .

There are nearly a hundred special-interest groups on-line now. Obviously, we can't profile all of them here, but we can give some examples of the variety. Choosing a SIG to call your own is a very personal thing. There's the thrill of discovering "your place" all by yourself.

We'd suggest you peck in to some of the ones we mention here and use them as a starting place for your home hunting.

Starting with some of the Home section groups (see HOM-50 for a more complete list):

National Issues & People (HOM-132)—Among all those special-interest groups, NIPSIG is a general-interest group, run by Georgia Griffith (aka "Angel"). The group features lively bulletin-board debates and weekly conferences on a wide range of current public issues, including politics, women's issues, media, sex, handicapped issues.

Literary SIG (HOM-136)—A gathering place for writers and readers alike, LITSIG is devoted to discussion of writing and publishing. Sysops Alex Krislov and Mimi Hiller open their doors to professionals and amateurs alike. The SIG has tangled some interesting, bold projects, such as a collaborative novel. Conference guests often include established authors talking about their latest projects.

Space SIG (HOM-127)—A group devoted to all aspects of space exploration, travel, and colonization. The group regularly posts NASA news releases on its bulletin boards.

Work-at-Home (HOM-146)—This one's devoted to the growing number of people who call their home their workplace. The SIG's motto is, "Take a coffee break with us." The group, run by Paul and Sarah Edwards, features useful information from both business experts as well as those who are working at home.

NETWITS (WIT-1)—For some users, this SIG is the gourmet's delight. Dedicated to humor through satire, dialogue, on-line skits, and short fiction, NETWITS often parodies CompuServe itself. Be ready for anything!

GameSig (HOM-143)—Here's a group of folks who like to talk about all kinds of games, from those available on CompuServe, to popular game software for your micro, to old standbys like chess and bridge. The group, run by a New Yorker who goes by the name Scorpia, even has on-line tournaments. (Charlie got the stuffings beat out of him in a chess tournament last year.)

Sports SIG (HOM-110)—For sports lovers, here's a SIG dedicated to all the major sports and sporting events.

Music SIG (HOM-150)—For the music lover in the family, Music SIG's interests range from classical and jazz to C/W and rock. The group also has an instrument-exchange section and is sponsored by the Music Information Service.

Animal and Pet Care (SFP-37)—For animal lovers, all. This is actually a professional forum for veterinarians, but animal owners are invited to ask questions of the experts who frequent the forum.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the system . . .

Some of the oldest SIGs on CompuServe are devoted to discussion of computers, either specific computer systems or to programming and computer owning in general.

Here are some of the SIGs you'll find in the Personal Computing section (see PCS-50 for a more complete list):

Authors SIG (PCS-117)—This is devoted (but not restricted) to writers in the microcomputer industry. Frequent visitors include editors and writers for microcomputer magazines. (Personal note: Charlie has a warm spot in his heart for this one, since he formed the group in 1982 and was its first sysop. It's now run by two California writers, Don Lloyd and Hardin Brothers.)

Programmers SIG (PCS-158)—This forum is populated by professional and amateur programmers who share tips about all aspects of programming. The group, headed by Charles McGuinness and Brad Paulsen, has had on-line teach-ins on a wide range of subjects, from assembly language to various operating systems.

Atari Forum (PCS-132)—This is one of the fastest-growing SIGs on the system and a primary source of technical information for Atari computer owners across the country. Run by a nonstop dynamo named Ron Luks of New York, the group has hosted conferences with such luminaries as premier programmer Chris Crawford.

Commodore SIGS (PCS-116)—There are several of them, devoted to the Pet, the VIC-20, and the Commodore 64. Together they represent some of the largest SIG membership rosters on the system. The forums are run by Commodore officials as on-line information services for their customers.

MAUG (PCS-51)—That's the MicroNet Apple Users Group. Any Apple owner or user may become a member. Apple founder Steve Wozniak was a guest in a SIG conference last year.

IBM PC SIG (PCS-131)—This users' group is designed to help the IBM personal-computer owner and supply information on public-domain programs.

Model 100 SIG (PSC-154)—This one is devoted to the Tandy portable computer, the TRS-80 Model 100. The sysops are editor/writers John Mello and Dave Thomas.

NODES DECODED

Several areas of CompuServe allow you to check the "user status" of programs you are using to find out who is in the same place you are at that time.

For instance, the CB Simulation and SIG conference areas allow

you to use the command /UST to find out who is on the channels besides you. You can use similar commands to find out who you are playing against in multiplayer games and to find out who else is in a SIG at the same time you are there.

This lists contain a three-letter code given under the heading "Node." All of these beginning with letters other than the letter Q are CompuServe nodes. ("Q" is used at the beginning of non-CompuServe nodes, such as Tymnet.) You can use them to find out approximately where those people are located.

Here are the three-letter CompuServe nodes (as of November 1983) and the cities they represent:

CODE	LOCATION
AKR	Akron OH
ALB	Albuquerque NM
ALL	Allentown PA
AMI	Golden CO
ANA	Anaheim CA
ANN	Ann Arbor MI
API	New York NY
ARL	Washington DC
ATG	Atlanta GA
ATL	Atlanta GA
ATM	Atlanta GA
AUG	Augusta GA
AUS	Austin TX
AVC	Columbus OH
BAT	Baton Rouge LA
BKN	Columbus OH
BOI	Boise ID
BOS	Boston MA
BOT	Boston MA
BRM	Birmingham AL
BTM	Baltimore MD
BUF	Buffalo NY
CAN	Canton OH
CBR	Columbus OH
CBS	Columbia SC
CGI	Chicago IL
CGM	Chicago IL
CGO	Chicago IL
CIN	Cincinnati OH
CLA	Columbus OH
CLB	Columbus OH

CLC	Columbus OH
CLD	Columbus OH
CLE	Columbus OH
CLF	Columbus OH
CLG	Columbus OH
CLH	Columbus OH
CLI	Columbus OH
CLJ	Columbus OH
CLK	Columbus OH
CLL	Columbus OH
CLM	Columbus OH
CLZ	Columbus OH
CNC	Charlotte NC
COL	Colorado Springs CO
COR	Dallas TX
CSA	Columbus OH
CSB	Columbus OH
CSC	Columbus OH
CSD	Columbus OH
CSE	Columbus OH
CSF	Columbus OH
CSG	Columbus OH
CSH	Columbus OH
CSI	Columbus OH
CSJ	Columbus OH
CSK	Columbus OH
CSL	Columbus OH
CSN	Columbus OH
CSP	Columbus OH
CSR	Columbus OH
CSS	Columbus OH
CST	Columbus OH
CSU	Columbus OH
CSV	Columbus OH
CSW	Columbus OH
CSX	Columbus OH
CTC	Charleston SC
CUD	Stamford CT
CVL	Cleveland OH
CVM	Cleveland OH
CWV	S. Charleston WV
DAL	Dallas TX
DAM	Dayton OH
DAY	Dayton OH

DBA	Dublin OH
DBB	Dublin OH
DBC	Dublin OH
DBD	Dublin OH
DBE	Dublin OH
DBF	Dublin OH
DBG	Dublin OH
DBH	Dublin OH
DBI	Dublin OH
DBJ	Dublin OH
DBK	Dublin OH
DBL	Dublin OH
DCA	Washington DC
DCB	Washington DC
DCC	Washington DC
DCD	Washington DC
DCE	Washington DC
DEC	Merrimack NH
DEM	Denver CO
DEN	Denver CO
DES	Des Moines IA
DET	Detroit MI
DIS	Columbus OH
DLS	Dallas TX
DTM	Detroit MI
DTQ	Cupertino CA
DTX	Dallas TX
DUA	Dublin OH
DUB	Dublin OH
DUT	Dublin OH
DUX	Dublin OH
ELP	El Paso TX
FRS	Fresno CA
FTL	Ft. Lauderdale FL
FTW	Ft. Worth TX
FWY	Ft. Wayne IN
FYL	Philadelphia PA
FYM	Philadelphia PA
GBN	Green Brook NJ
GJC	Grand Junction CO
GNC	Greensboro NC
HAK	Hackettstown NJ
HAM	Framingham MA
HAP	Harrisburg PA

HAR	Hartford CT
HNT	Huntsville AL
HOM	Houston TX
HOU	Houston TX
ILS	Memphis TN
IND	Indianapolis IN
JAK	Jackson MS
JAX	Jacksonville FL
KCI	Kansas City MO
KMZ	Kalamazoo MI
KXT	Knoxville TN
LAM	Los Angeles CA
LAN	Los Angeles CA
LAS	Las Vegas NV
LBC	Long Beach CA
LEX	Lexington KY
LIS	Hicksville NY
LOS	Los Angeles CA
LOU	Louisville KY
LRK	Little Rock AR
LSM	Lansing MI
LUB	Lubbock TX
MEM	Memphis TN
MEN	Memphis TN
MIA	Miami FL
MIN	Minneapolis MN
MLW	Milwaukee WI
NAS	Nashville TN
NFK	Norfolk VA
NOL	New Orleans LA
NRK	Newark NJ
NYB	New York NY
NYC	New York NY
NYD	New York NY
NYE	New York NY
NYF	New York NY
NYN	Paterson NJ
NYW	New York NY
OAG	Oakbrook IL
OCG	Granville OH
OCT	Toledo OH
OKE	Oklahoma City OK
OMA	Millard NE
ORL	Orlando FL

PAR	Parsippany NJ
PLS	Pittsburgh PA
PIT	Pittsburgh PA
PNX	Scottsdale AZ
POR	Portland OR
PRI	Princeton NJ
PRN	Princeton NJ
PRV	Providence RI
PXP	Columbus OH
RAL	Raleigh NC
RAP	Rapid City SD
RCH	Rochester NY
REN	Reno NV
RIC	Richmond VA
RIV	Riverside CA
SAC	Sacramento CA
SAG	Bay City MI
SAN	San Antonio TX
SDC	San Diego CA
SEA	Seattle WA
SFA	San Francisco CA
SFB	San Francisco CA
SFM	San Francisco CA
SJO	San Jose CA
SLC	Salt Lake City UT
SLM	St. Louis MO
SMO	Belmont CA
SPM	Springfield MA
SPO	Spokane WA
SPR	Springfield IL
STL	St. Louis MO
SVP	Shreveport LA
SWM	Cleveland OH
SWN	Cleveland OH
TAL	Tallahassee FL
TAM	Tampa FL
TEL	Washington DC
TOK	Tulsa OK
TSA	Tucson AZ
TSB	Tucson AZ
TSC	Tucson AZ
TSD	Tucson AZ
TYM	Plymouth MI
TYN	Glen Ellen IL

VAN	Panorama City CA
WCH	Wichita KS
WES	Westport CT
WIL	New Castle DE
WOR	Marinette WI
WPL	White Plains NY

INDEX—ANOTHER VIEW

As you know, a searchable on-line index of all CompuServe services can be used by entering G INDEX, or G IND-1 at any prompt.

However, you might not want to spend your valuable connect time browsing. So, for your off-line browsing pleasure, here's another view of some of CompuServe's major features. We hope it will serve as a quick search.

As you've seen, CompuServe's main menu is divided into several major branches—the Home Services, Personal Computing Services, Professional Services, User Options, and others. Here are some of the major features, under each of those main headings, with their page numbers.

Address	page	description
---------	------	-------------

CB SIMULATION

CB	I	Direct access to
	10	Introduction
	15	Instructions
	40	CB Etiquette

USER OPTIONS

CIS	4	Billing, general
	9	Defalt, setting
	8	Documentation ordering, Feedback, help
	9	Changing terminal type
	11	CompuServc commands summary
	162	Help
	175	Changing password
	176	Billing, reviewing
	177	Access phone numbers

FINANCIAL SERVICES

FIN	4	Financial forecasts, earnings, futures
	10	News: economic, investment, industry
	18	Annual reports
	20	AMEX prices (MicroQuote), Standard & Poor's

GAME INSTRUCTIONS

GAM	45	Astrology
	32	Backgammon
	30	Banshi
	29	Biorhythms
	13	Blackjack
	18	Bridge
	14	Civil War
	32	Concentration
	33	Dice
	17	FasterMind
	27	Football
	36	Fur Trader
	21	Golf
	22	Gomoku
	37	Hammurabi
	23	Hangman
	46	Kesmai
	24	Lunar Lander
	38	Maze
	15	MegaWars III
	39	Mugwump
	300	Multi-Player GameSIG
	12	New Adventure
	42	Roulette
	28	Scott Adams's Games
	43	Scramble
	57	SeaWar
	26	Space Trek
	44	Wumpus

HOME SERVICES

HOM	4	User directory
	9	CB Interest Group (CBIG)
	11	Amateur radio (HamNet)

13	ORCH-90 (computer music) SIG
14	Checkbook balancer
15	Calculate a raise
16	Net worth
17	Amortize a loan
23	Bulletin board
24	For sale
28	Educational research
29	Entertainment (SIG)
30	Bulletin board
45	Banking, electronic
101	Art gallery (line-printer art)
109	Cooking (SIG)
110	Sports (SIG)
127	Space (SIG)
129	Golf (SIG)
132	National issues SIG (NIPSIG)
136	Literary SIG
137	Educators' (SIG)
138	Arcade (SIG)
144	Family matters forum
145	Good Earth (SIG)
146	Job, in the home (work-at-home SIG)
150	Music forum
151	Food buyline (SIG)
157	Travel (SIG)

PERSONAL COMPUTING SERVICES

PCS	40	Software Exchange (Softex)
	46	Public Access
	47	CP/M users' group
	48	Heath users' group (HUG)
	49	LSI (SIG)
	51	Apple Users' Group (MAUG)
	52	TeleComm (SIG)
	53	MNET-11 (SIG)
	54	TRS-80 MNET80 (SIG)
	55	Musus-Pascal (SIG)
	56	PowerSoft's XTRA-80
	57	RCA (SIG)
	103	Terminal software, vidtex executive
	114	PUG (Panasonic SIG)
	117	Software & Authors SIG

- 121 Personal Computing
- 125 Ohio Scientific (SIG)
- 126 TRS-80 color computer (SIG)
- 131 IBM PC SIG
- 132 Atari forum
- 145 Microsoft (SIG)
- 154 TRS-80 Model 100 (SIG)
- 157 Computer art (SIG)
- 158 Programmers (SIG)
- 160 Commodore (SIGs)

SERVICES FOR PROFESSIONALS

SFP	5	AAMSI Medical Forum
	6	Aviation (SIG)
	7	ASCMD (SIG)
	10	Agribusiness, business, farming, horticulture, husbandry
	30	Fire prevention
	35	Communications SIG
	37	Fire fighters' (SIG)
	38	Environmental forum
	40	Legal forum

FURTHER READING

Some people can never read enough about a subject. If you're that way about telecommunications now, you're in luck. There are other books and articles about telecommunications, including CompuServe.

And some of them you'll start receiving as a CompuServe subscriber.

COMPUERVE PUBLICATIONS

Online Today is a monthly magazine about videotex that is delivered to CompuServe subscribers.

As a CompuServe user, you'll also receive a regular newsletter called *Update*. *Update* is devoted to CompuServe only and carries news of changes in the system, new on-line features, and how-to articles.

In addition, you can order printed documentation for many of the features on the system. Most of the manuals are available from

Feedback (CIS-8) for a small fee. As we mentioned in the Games section (chapter 15), some manuals, like the one for MegaWars, you should order if you plan to play. Others might help you further understand features discussed here. In most cases, you can charge the cost of the documentation to your regular CompuServe bill.

And if you buy software from CompuServe's Software Exchange program (Softex), printed documentation will automatically be mailed to you.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Other commercial magazines are also beginning to discover the wonderful world of information retrieval. In the fall of 1983, two new computer-communications magazines began publication. Neither deals strictly with CompuServe, but both have articles that should be of interest to those who frequent these parts.

One is *Link-Up*, published monthly by On-Line Communications, Inc., 3938 Meadowbrook Road, Minneapolis, Minn. 55426.

Another is *Micro Communications*, published by Miller Freeman Publications, 500 Howard St., San Francisco, Calif. 94105.

In addition, some general computer magazines have devoted regular monthly column space to network issues and news. A notable one is "Dial-Up Directory," by Frank J. Derfler, a monthly column in *Microcomputing*, a Wayne Green publication, 80 Pine St., Peterborough, N.H. 03458. (Derfler, the author of a number of technical computer books on telecommunications, had one of the first computer-communications columns we knew of in a national magazine.)

Finally, some general-interest, noncomputer magazines have taken an interest in computer networks. Most notably *Ms.* magazine has featured a number of articles by Lindsay Van Gelder about features on CompuServe.

OTHER BOOKS

If you enjoyed this tour guide to CompuServe, there are a few other books you might watch for.

One of the best is Alfred Glossbrenner's *The Complete Handbook of Personal Computer Communications* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1983). It has chapters on most of the major data-retrieval services in the country. Unfortunately, some of the material about CompuServe in the first edition was slightly outdated, but it is still a valuable overview of computer networks in general.

Two other general-interest books on computer networking you might be interested in are *Using Computer Information Services*, by

Jeff Williams and Larry Sturtz, two CompuServe employees (published by Howard W. Sams) and *The Computer Phone Book*, a directory of assorted on-line databases and bulletin boards, by Mike Cane (New American Library, New York, 1983).

VI. REACHING US

Now that you're a seasoned traveler in this electronic world, we hope you'll feel free to drop us a line sometime and let us know how you're getting along. We're only an Email away.

You can reach Charlie by writing to user ID 71635,1025.

Dave can be reached at 70475,1165, or in his Good Earth SIG, HOM-145.

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